GODEY'S

LADY'S BOOK.

PHILADELPHIA, JUNE, 1851.

THE STORM

BY MARY SPENSER PEASE.

(*See Plate.*)

During the lifetime of Martina Herbert, and through the lingering disease that consumed her days, was she the gentle, loving wife, and the tender, far-seeing mother.

The village matrons held up her two modest, pretty-behaved little girls as models to their own refractory children. And the village husbands held up the pious, prudent Martina as an example to their own gossip-loving wives.

And when she died, the white-haired, good old parson, Mr. Gaylord, preached a funeral sermon over her remains that caused the tears, from out the hardest heart within the church, to flow like a river from the eyes. "The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away," said he, in conclusion. "She, whose only fault was in being too good for this earth, hath gone from where all sin and sorrow is, home to her own father's bosom."

Martina's last words were to her husband, beseeching him that, if he ever felt as though he must give a new mother to their children, he would choose one who would be kind to them, and who would bring them up not to shine in this world except in truth and goodness. Most faithfully did Edward Herbert promise to revere the dying behest of his wife.

A year had passed since Martina was laid down to rest in the little village churchyard. From the desolate heart of the stricken husband the grief that at first refused to be comforted had settled into a calm, deep sorrow, that yielded with holy faith to the inevitable. He felt, by little and little, how unutterably lonely he was without the intimate sympathy of a dear wife. He felt also his own insufficiency in training aright his two little orphan girls. That he never could supply the place of the lost, he felt too keenly; but that he might find one who would be a mother to his little ones, and who would once more a *home* around him, was what he might do. Edward Herbert was a God-loving and God-serving man. Duty was the strong principle of his life. However lonely he might himself be, had he not felt that his darlings needed the tender, watchful care of a woman and a mother, it would have been less easy for him to think of taking to his sorrowing heart another love, after having known that of his departed Martina. She had been dead a year, and, for the first time, he cast about him, seriously and prayerfully, who should be his wisest choice.

Why did his heart revert so constantly to Edith Moore? And why as constantly did he crush the rising thought as one that might have been sent him for a temptation by the enemy?

It was true that Edith had been best beloved, of all the village maidens, by Martina Herbert; that Martina had accepted more of her company than that of any other; that she had intrusted to her the care of her little girls when she would leave them with no one else. True, also, that the children clung to Edith after their mother's death, and she to them, as they or she did to nobody else. No one had the power over them in soothing their griefs, or in checking any display of ill temper, as had Edith Moore. All this Edward Herbert saw and felt; yet he felt also that Edith was in years so much a child compared with himself—for Edward was thirty-five, and Edith scarce twenty—that, as Miss Prudence Hook had justly remarked, "she might be the very person to take the entire charge of so important a household, were she not certainly too giddy, or, if not that, most unquestionably too young."

Miss Prudence herself had long outgrown that serious fault, having, by full twenty years, the seniority and superiority over Edith. Then, for the first time, Edward thought of Miss Prudence in person as a mother to his children. The thought revolted him; but, because it did revolt him, he recurred to it again and again, until at last, from its

utter unpleasantness, it began to seem to him his duty to make her the offer of becoming mistress to his household. She had been so very kind to his children; she had taken such a motherly interest in them since his wife's death; she had tried to console him in his grief; and had more than once said, proving her great pity for the children—

"My dear friend, I beg you will take no thought of your dear children that shall trouble you. If your inclinations ever lead you to seek for a partner, one who, upon proof, turns out to be an unworthy mother to them, they will always have a refuge in my home. And I shall be only too happy in working for them as I would for my own."

The children, to be sure, did not seem to love Miss Prudence, appearing rather to shrink from her caresses; "but then," thought he, "they will learn to love her." Had he thought still deeper, he would have recognized the unerring instinct of childhood—before that instinct has been deadened by the policy of the world—as the truest truth.

After thinking thus, his feelings would flow warmly back to Edith, dwelling upon her fresh young face and joyous ways until the heart within him ached with a dull, dreary pain, in its yearning to fold her closely in his arms.

Even then he could see her from his open window, sitting under the old chestnut tree with his two little girls, one upon each side of her, with an arm lovingly around each. And he could hear the soft tones of her sweet voice explaining patiently to them some school wisdom. He could hear their thousand and one childish questions, and her never-wearying and wisely-fashioned answers. The task at last was finished; their morrow's lessons learned.

"Now for a race!" And the patient teacher, so full of sweet, solemn dignity, was off like a streak of lightning, and speeding after her were the merry, shouting children, so full of fun and frolic, who, but the moment before, had been the toiling, docile pupils.

Edward watched them in their airy course until Edith, at last fairly caught and imprisoned, was borne to the ground by the little rebels. She was a willing captive, and so full of laugh, and so tired from her chase, that she let them do with her as they would. It was under the same old chestnut tree, where the wild pursuit began, that it ended. Martina Herbert, the elder of Edward's children, had pulled the comb from the light brown hair of Edith, and, curling, waving in the warm sunshine like threads of gold, it fell in rich luxuriance around her beautiful shoulders. Little Minny ran to gather fresh flowers from the near honeysuckle, and, twining the fragrant blossoms around her head, exclaimed, laughingly and lispingly—

"'Thee, dear thithter, I've crowned our pretty Edith. Now she ith a queen."

"She does not need any crown, dear little Minny. She is a queen in her own right!" replied Martina, with warmth.

"I had rather she would be my mamma than a queen on a golden throne. Now play you wath my own ownethst mamma, and thing me to thleep."

And little Minny nestled close up into Edith's arms, half in sport, and all in love, and laying her smooth round cheek up against Edith's soft white throat, she shut her eyes tightly. Edith, yielding to the child's desire, clasped her arms tenderly around her and sang, in a low sweet voice, a plaintive lullaby.

From his full heart the warm tears came to Edward's eyes, and, giving himself up to the impulse, he wept like a woman. The tears did him good; they watered over the choking, yearning thirst that parched his soul—the thirst for love, for the tender sympathy and love of the gentle, good being before him, who had not seen him, who knew not that he had been watching her.

The tea bell sounding through the house awoke Edward Herbert to himself. He chid himself severely for his long waste of time. For two whole hours had he lost all sight of himself in that long trance-like dream of Edith.

"Where is Miss Moore, Martina?" was his first question, as he entered the supper-room.

"Her mother wished her not to stay to tea. She had need of her."

"Edith is a most dutiful daughter."

"That she is, dear papa. She is better in all things than any one else, and the only one that is at all like my own dear dead mother. I love her better than anybody except you, papa."

"Tho do I," lisped little Minny.

"But she is so young," thought the father, when he was once more alone; "and she may be, perhaps, too giddy, as Miss Prudence says, to take the charge of my children and house." Edith's sweet, serious eyes rose up before him with a gentle reproach in their tender blue. "She *has* dignity, if she is young," still said he to himself; "and, with all her childlike playfulness, is full of womanliness. Oh, that I knew what to do in this sore trial! I will at least advise with Miss Prudence; she is wise and experienced. She can tell me what is right."

On his way to the abode of Miss Hook, he had to pass Mrs. Moore's cottage. It stood next his own more stately residence, and about three-quarters of a mile from the village. Mrs. Moore was the widow of a revolutionary soldier, and she lived alone with Edith, her youngest child left of eight, upon a small pension granted her for life.

"Blessed are the pure in heart." Mrs. Moore was sitting in the door of her cottage, and Edith, close beside her, was reading aloud to her that sermon containing the soul of every sermon that has been uttered since it was delivered.

That low clear voice, in the still summer air, brought those divine words to him with an impressiveness that filled him with love and awe. As Edward, in passing, deferentially saluted both mother and daughter, Edith's face suddenly flushed and as suddenly grew snowy pale. Never befo

had she seemed so beautiful as now. His heart beat thick and fast; and an irresistible longing came over him to go and take her hand and tell her how dear she had become to him. With an iron will, he put the temptation from him until he should feel that duty fully justified him in so doing.

Miss Prudence Hook lived on the verge of the village, supporting herself, as she had for years, solely by her needle. She possessed an unequaled reputation for good works, and was generally consulted for her right-judging wisdom. Any one well experienced in character would have read hers more aright than did these simple, truthful-hearted villagers.

With an art that Edward, in his straightforward, unsuspecting nature, did not fathom, she placed Edith in the light of a frivolous young thing, very beautiful; and her beauty she descanted upon, until Edward felt that the winning beauty was given her but to betray all who looked upon it. She spoke of Edith as designing evidently to make use of her charms to ensnare him; also of her great attention to his children for the same purpose. Her mother was old and feeble, and could not live long; with her died Edith's means of support; and it was evident to the mind of Miss Prudence that Mr. Herbert's comfortable home possessed a rare charm to her eyes. Alas, poor Edith!

"My dear sir, should you not be able to resist the temptation which comes to you in the shape of this passing passion, I pray, I beseech you not to sacrifice those dear children that the sainted Martina left with such holy injunction for their welfare. Should you not feel strength given you to overcome this weakness, intrust the dear infants to my care, and I will not betray the trust."

The smooth tones of that insinuating voice dropped into his heart like ice. Yes, Edith *was* a child, too young and inexperienced to be a mother to his children. His feelings for her must be checked. The spirit of his departed wife stood before him, and her last injunction rung in his ear. The plausible words of the artful woman by his side seemed truth to him. And, as he was on the point of asking her to take charge of him and his, the image of Edith rose up between him and the spinster, so pure and holy, that he turned his sentence into an abrupt good-by.

"I can ask her to be my wife at another time," said he to himself, on his way home.

Upon the following morning, the sun rose lazily, not having made up his mind exactly whether he would show his face to the world or not. All nature seemed as indolent. The air was heavy almost to suffocation. The noisy fowls and cattle were huddled together in silent groups under some shelter. A hush pervaded all things. Even the merry birds were mute, as if in wait for some anticipated danger. Heavy masses of black cloud, darkening the thick air, floated listlessly in the heavens, and the far-off thunders were muttering in a low, deep under-tone.

Edward Herbert was sitting in his own room, after breakfast, with a book before him, and lost in deep thought. His door softly opened, and the sunny face of his little Martina appeared.

"We are going to start for school earlier than usual, dear papa, because it looks so much like rain."

"Very well, my darling. Take good care of Minny."

"Oh, no fear, dear papa, but that I will. Give me one kiss; and now good-by."

The door was closed again, and Edward, lost once more in his own meditations, was not fully aroused to the danger his little girls were in, nor to his own want of thought in permitting them to brave such a threatening sky, until there came a flash of lightning so intense that it nearly blinded him, causing him to cover both eyes with his hands. Then followed a peal of thunder, most fearful in its deep stunning roar. It seemed to waken all the echoes for leagues around, and died with them in one lingering, sullen sound. The fast rain was coming down, not in pleasant drops, but in one pouring, rushing stream. Almost the darkness of night hung over the earth, while the wind, like a mad spirit sent abroad for destruction, shrieked and raved, splintering trees and tearing them up by their roots in its angry might. How long it had been storming he knew not; but, with a thick beating heart foreboding ill, Edward hastened down to the old housekeeper.

"How long have the children been gone?"

"Above half an hour, sir. I tried hard to make them stay; but they said they would get to the school-house long before the storm came up."

"Pray Heaven they may have got there; but I fear—I fear they have not. Give me my old hat and thick boots. They *must* have crossed Hemlock Rapids before now. Still I fear for them. Never mind the boots; I will go as I am. No, no! —no umbrella; the wind is too high."

Some fifteen minutes before Edward's rapid strides plashed through the road, that was already more like a river than a carriage-way, Edith Moore, coming into the sitting-room of their little cottage, exclaimed—

"There, dearest mother, I have fastened tightly all the windows and doors. So now the storm can't hurt us, unless it lifts our castle up by its roots, and gives us a ride through the air. How dark it grows, and how the wind howls! There comes the rain. Save us! what sharp lightning! How glad I am the storm has come on before Martina and little Minny started for school!"

"Heaven shield the dear children!" ejaculated Mrs. Moore. "I saw them pass the door full fifteen minutes ago."

"And they have to cross those fearful rapids, always swollen in a storm!"

Edith waited not for another word. Almost before her mother felt that she had left her side, was the cottage-door closed after her, and her light form

was flying, more than running, in the direction the little Herberts had taken.

The school-house was on the edge of the village, and sheltered by a picturesque little wood. It was full three-quarters of a mile from Mr. Herbert's house. The little girls had gone about half the way when the storm commenced. They still went on, sheltering themselves with their umbrella as best they could. At length they came in sight of the rapids. The wind, suddenly rising, shivered their umbrella, and hurled it from their weak hold. Flash followed flash, and peal followed peal. The rain poured down in torrents, and the little girls stood doubting what to do.

A flash of lightning, more fearfully intense than any that had yet been, succeeded at the same instant by a perfectly deafening peal of thunder, caused the children to draw more closely to each other. Martina held the little one tightly up to her, shielding her with a part of her own dress; and little Minny, nestling her head in Martina's bosom, covered her ears with both hands in extreme terror at the dread voice of nature.

"We had best go on, dear Minny; for there is Hemlock River right before us, and we have only to cross that, and we are close to the shelter of the school-house."

"Oh, dear thithter, I can't go any farther. I am tho afraid, and tho tired, and tho wet."

"Cheer up, darling, I will help you, and God will not desert us. Cheer up, pet, we will soon be at the nice school-house, and Miss Polly will dry our clothes as soon as we get there."

They had reached the boiling stream, but, to their disappointment, the bridge was broken, and part of it had been swept away.

"Never mind, dear Minny, there are the saw-logs we have been over so many times. I guess we can cross them now."

They were half way across the unsteady logs, when Minny's foot slipped, and into the surging waters she went, drawing Martina along with her. Martina was the first to catch sight of the flying form of Edith coming towards them.

"Oh, Edith! save her! save her!"

And quicker than thought Edith was in the stream, and, with both the children clasped in her arms, was struggling for the bank. The river at that point was fortunately not very deep, but the onward torrent was so rapid that, when at last she reached the shore, it was at a point much lower down the current, and where the rocks piled so perpendicularly that she found it impossible to ascend. How long she could have resisted those onward raging waters, holding by the willow twigs that grew out of the crevices of the rocks, supporting the almost fainting children clinging to her—how much longer she might have resisted those wild onward rapids, she knew not. Her head began to swim, and she felt that soon she and her dear little friends must be borne away to inevitable death.

"My dear, dear, dearest children! Bless God, I am in time!" And the strong, saving arm was around all three; and all three were clasped tightly and warm to his bosom. "My darlings, thank God, I have you all three safe!"

The fury of the storm was spent. Edward had his three dear ones safely on the bank. He could not be happy enough; he could not be sufficiently grateful. He held them to his heart, and called them again and again his three dear children.

A neighbor's wagon came by. The farmer gladly took them in, and, spurring up his horses, the dripping, half-drowned ones were soon in Edward's warm house.

A messenger was dispatched to Mrs. Moore, to let her know that all were safe.

From that day to this, Edward Herbert has had cause to bless the storm, so fearful in itself, that was the means of giving him such a loving, gentle wife, and his children such a loving, faithful mother.

A SONG FOR JUNE.

BY FANNY FALES.

FIRST-BORN of summer-time, beautiful June!
A sweet poem set to melodious tune;
Azure-eyed pet on the breast of the year,
Flow'r-crowned and peerless one, June, thou art here!

Wild roses scent the balmy air,
Bird notes are trilling everywhere;
The brooklet gushes, with a song,
The flower-enameled vale along;
On glossy-tinted wings flit by
The golden bee and butterfly;
In emerald robes, the forest dim
Sends up to God a grateful hymn.
The lily on the lake is seen,
A pearl upon her breast I ween;
The orchards, in full blossoming,
Upon the air rich odors fling;
The iris by the sedgy stream,
In noon sun nodding, seems to dream.

'Tis pleasant now, in morning hours,
To wander 'mid the dewy flowers,
And list the voices of the wood,
So sweet they make its solitude.
Its solitude? How can it dwell,
When bird, and rill, and zephyr tell
Of Him who filleth earth and air?
Not solitude; for *He* is there!
'Tis only found within the heart
That hath in joy and hope no part.
The earth is full of song and bloom,
Sunlight and gladness and perfume;
Gifts from our Father's hand divine
To welcome in the summer-time.

ELLA MASON; OR, THE ROMANCE OF A SECOND MARRIAGE.

BY EFFIE EVERGREEN.

"And so, Ella, you think it impossible that there can be any romance in a second marriage?" And the speaker, a fair and gentle-looking woman, no longer young, but with a countenance whose placid beauty Time could not destroy, looked pleasantly into the bright eyes of the lovely girl who sat on a low ottoman beside her.

"Not one particle of romance, Aunt Hetty, either in the marriage itself or in the hearts of those who contract it. All freshness of feeling must be gone before such a thing can be thought of; and I believe a second marriage is always a mere matter either of calculation or convenience."

"But even allowing the unfortunate individual, who a second time enters the married state, to have lost his freshness of feeling, as you call it, and to be incapable of loving again with all the ardor of his first love, may he not be twice *loved*? And may there not be as much romantic devotion to him in the heart of his second partner as in the first?"

"Impossible, aunt! 'A heart requires a heart, nor will be satisfied with less than what it gives.' He would have only the shadow of love to offer, and therefore could not receive the substance in return."

"And so poor Sidney, rich, handsome, accomplished, and agreeable as you own him to be, has been rejected simply because he has loved before? It is hard, indeed, if he must pass the rest of his life alone, because he had the misfortune to lose the object of his first choice, to whom he was united when little more than a boy. Dying, as she did, in less than a month from their marriage, that early attachment must seem to him more like a pleasant dream than a reality."

"It is a dream to which he still clings most fondly, aunt. I have seen him show far more emotion when speaking of his dead wife than he ever did in expressing his love for me."

"And that emotion, Ella, should have taught you how deeply he can love, and the worth of the heart you have thrown from you. I fear me you may live to repent this foolish fancy."

"Never, never, aunt. I could not love Mr. Sidney; and I would sooner die than marry one I did not love. I respect and esteem him; but I will never accept a divided heart—one filled with the memory of a former affection. I shall never love but once; and if I cannot receive in return the freshness of a first and only devotion, I will do as you have done, and remain single."

"We shall see," replied her aunt, smiling, though half sadly. "You know but little of life yet, Ella. I, for one, shall not be surprised if, after all this romance, you commence the realities of life by uniting yourself to a widower with half a dozen children, not half so attractive or interesting as George Sidney."

"Aunt Hetty!" commenced the girl, indignantly; but she really loved her aunt dearly, and meeting her now playful smile, the angry flush upon her cheek subsided, and, tossing the curls back from her fair brow, she concluded the conversation with, "You are too bad, aunt; I will go and talk to Fido: I really believe he has more sentiment than you" And she was soon bounding through the garden with her favorite spaniel at her side.

Ella Mason was the eldest daughter of wealthy and indulgent parents. Lovely and interesting, though not strikingly beautiful, she had many friends, and had as yet known nothing of the realities of life. The pride of her parents, and of the aunt who had superintended her education, and the idol of her younger brothers and sisters, she had glided through the world for eighteen years, sheltered from its trials, with no wish ungratified, no fancy crossed. Suitors had gathered round; but she was still, "in maiden meditation, fancy free." George Sidney, whose offer and rejection gave rise to the conversation with which our tale begins, was the only one whose attentions she had ever encouraged, and this was but from her ignorance of his *true* feelings towards her. She esteemed him as a friend, almost a brother, but to think of him as a lover and a husband—oh no! she would be no man's *second* wife; and, with this firm resolve, she turned to her birds and flowers, and dreamed of a future as bright and cloudless as the past and present.

But clouds were gathering in her sky, although she saw them not; and, before she had passed her nineteenth summer, the sun of worldly prosperity was shining on her way no more. One of those sudden convulsions which sometimes shake the commercial world destroyed her father's fortune in a day. Everything was swept from them; their beautiful house passed into the hands of strangers; and they found themselves dependent upon their own exertions for support. It was a terrible blow, and, at first, seemed more than they could bear; and, but for Aunt Hetty, a sister of Mrs. Mason, who had shared their prosperity, and still clung to them in their adversity, they might have sunk into hopeless poverty. Her cheering words roused, first the parents, and then Ella, from their stupor; and a little exertion procured for Mr. Mason a clerkship, which would secure them at least from absolute want;

while his daughter sought, and, by the assistance of her friends, obtained, a situation as governess in the family of a clergyman in a neighboring city.

It was a sad trial to the young girl to leave those whom she loved so dearly, and go out among strangers; but she knew it to be necessary, and, encouraged by Aunt Hetty, and supported by the hope of contributing to the comfort of her parents, she went cheerfully. And, though she wept long and bitterly through the first nights passed away from home, she became gradually reconciled to the change, and, after a time, warmly attached to the little ones under her charge, and the parents who had confided them to her.

Mr. and Mrs. Grant, into whose family she had entered, were still young, and they soon learned to regard Ella rather as a sister than a stranger, and she sometimes forgot, for a little while, that she was not at home. To the children she gave the warm affection of an elder sister, scarcely second to that bestowed upon her own; their mother filled a place in her heart never before satisfied, kind and thoughtful as her mother or Aunt Hetty, yet so near her own age as to render their intercourse perfectly familiar and sisterlike; while to Mr. Grant, she soon learned to look up as something almost more than human. He was, indeed, a rare character; in purity of life and calm dignity of manner, just what we imagine a minister of the Gospel should be, yet gentle and cheerful, and, in the family circle, affectionately joining in every plan that could give pleasure to the humblest member of his household, with as much apparent interest as in the loftier duties which claimed his first attention.

And here Ella, for the first time, saw the beauty of religion, and the charm which it can cast over even the everyday transactions of life, and was led to seek and find a participation in its blessings. No wonder that she loved those who had been the means of leading her to a happiness of which, in the brightest days of her prosperity, she had never dreamed!

But, holy as seemed the happiness of that little household, it was not destined to last. Mrs. Grant's health, always delicate, began to decline; and, though no means were left untried which the most devoted affection could suggest, she sank, after many weeks of suffering, into an early grave.

It was a few hours before her death that, rousing from a heavy slumber, or rather lethargy, into which she had fallen, she desired her children to be brought to her. They were soon gathered at her side; the youngest, a babe of six months old, nestling in Ella's bosom; while the next in age, a lovely boy of three years old, his father's image and namesake, clung round her, frightened by the darkened room and the labored breathing of his dying parent. The others, old enough to understand something of the scene, turned, sobbing, to their father for the comfort which he sorely needed for himself. He drew them to their mother's couch, and, taking their little hands in hers, already cold and clammy with the dew of death, she spoke a few brief words of counsel and of blessing. Then, motioning for Ella to come closer to her side, she whispered, in tones now scarcely audible—

"Promise me you will not leave them when I am gone."

For an instant, she did not reply; tears choked her utterance, and, before she could command her voice, the dying mother, taking her silence for denial, murmured again—

"Ella, my friend, my sister, you will not refuse my last request? you will not leave my children to the care of strangers?"

Her husband had bent down to catch the whisper, and he turned a look of such appeal on Ella that, had she wavered, it must have decided her. But hers had not been the silence of hesitation, but of uncontrollable emotion; and, by an effort repressing the sobs which almost suffocated her, she uttered—

"I will never leave them—never!" and, bending her head over the infant in her arms, yielded to a fresh burst of tears.

"I am satisfied," murmured the sufferer, faintly, and her face was bright with a lofty faith; "God will take care of them, and you will not forsake them. Lift them up, Henry, that I may kiss my children once more."

The father raised the older ones to receive the parting embrace; but the babe lay on Ella's bosom, and, as she bent down to place it for an instant in its mother's arms, Mrs. Grant, raising herself with sudden energy, clasped both the child and her who held it to her breast—

"You will never leave it, Ella?" she repeated; "you will never forsake my child?"

"Never, as I hope to meet you in a better world!" answered the weeping girl.

"God bless you, dearest, and give you strength to perform your promise;" and, releasing her, she pressed her cold and quivering lips upon her infant's brow, and sank back exhausted in her husband's arms.

Ella hurried with the children to the nursery, and returned to watch beside her dying friend. A brief period closed her earthly existence; but not till she had again, almost unconscious of having done so before, asked and received Ella's promise never to leave her little ones while they needed her care.

And the vow made at that sad hour of parting, and again renewed as she stood alone beside the cold form of her who had been to her as a dear sister, was faithfully kept.

A year had passed since the death of Mrs. Grant, and Ella, or Miss Mason, as every one but the children called her, was still the presiding genius of the bereaved family. She had never left them for a day, scarcely for an hour. Her father's efforts had retrieved his affairs, and he had more than once urged her return to a home which, though less luxurious than her early residence, was far more splendid than the comparatively humble one she

occupied. But, though the affection which she bore her early friends and her own dear family was neither changed nor lessened, she could not leave what she felt to be her post of duty, nor did she wish to do so.

Mr. Grant never urged her stay. He had alluded only once to his wife's request, and that soon after her death—

"I have nothing to offer which can tempt you to remain," he said; "for my home will not be now what it was when she was here. Yet you know how much, how very much my children need you; and if you can feel willing to stay for their sakes, and that of her who asked it, I shall be most grateful, and God will bless you for the act."

An earnest assurance of the pleasure which she felt in being permitted to watch over the children, and, in any degree, to minister to his comfort, satisfied him; and, from that time, the subject was no more alluded to. Indeed, very little conversation of any kind took place between them; for Mr. Grant seemed now to shun the family circle as carefully as he had once sought it. The greater portion of his time was spent in retirement and study, and he appeared to have lost all taste for social enjoyment since she, who had brightened every scene to him, had passed away.

Miss Mason had taken, almost as a matter of course, the whole direction of the household, and he felt no anxiety for worldly things. He saw his children well and happy, improving in their education; and, though he superintended a part of that education, the general conduct of it was left to their fond and efficient governess.

And what had Ella, the once gay and brilliant Ella, who for more than eighteen years had sported through life, scarcely conscious of the existence of such a thing as care—what had she to reconcile her to a life of constant watchfulness and never-ceasing thought? She had the smiles of an approving conscience, the affection of the little ones for whom she lived, and the hope of being one day permitted to present them, in the world above, to the mother from whom she had received the charge. And, as she watched their growing intelligence with almost a mother's pride, or felt their little arms twined round her neck, and their warm lips pressed to her cheek, she thought herself fully repaid for every hour of anxiety, every feeling of responsibility and care. The weight, too, had come gradually upon her, and was therefore less heavily felt. At first, she was simply the teacher of the little ones; then, as Mrs. Grant's health gave way, one duty after another was assumed to relieve the invalid, until, long before her death, she had under her direction the entire charge of the domestic concerns, and, when that took place, she became the nominal, as she had before been the real, head of the family.

But this was too peaceful and happy a state to remain altogether undisturbed; and rumors, for some time in circulation in the congregation of which she was a member and Mr. Grant pastor, began to reach Miss Mason. She had always looked upon her minister as a being apart from the rest of the world, one not to be spoken of lightly, nor approached with even the shadow of disrespect; nor had a daily and comparatively familiar intercourse with him ever removed this impression from her mind. Words would fail to express her grief and indignation at hearing, from one whom she had deemed a friend, that the name of this honored being had been coupled with her own in light words and lighter jests, and that his comparative seclusion from his people had been attributed to other causes than grief for the wife he had so tenderly loved, so deeply lamented.

"An angel from Heaven would not escape censure from those who would speak thus of Mr. Grant!" she exclaimed, unable to restrain the expression of her indignation. "If ever there was a being on earth whose life might challenge the closest scrutiny, it is his."

"I have no doubt *you* think so, Miss Mason," said her gratified informant, smiling maliciously; "but others"—

"Others!" she interrupted, impatiently. "And who knows Mr. Grant so well as I?"

"No one, certainly; but I was only going to observe that they would scarcely think you a disinterested witness."

A withering reply rose to the lips of the excited girl; but she felt that it was worse than useless to prolong the conversation, and, suppressing her feelings, directed it into another channel; and the lady visitor, having succeeded in the object of her call, and obtained fresh material for gossip, soon took her departure, leaving Ella to thoughts sad and agitated beyond any she had ever known before. And yet it was rather feeling than thought, for of thought she was just then scarcely capable; but the emotions awakened by what she had heard were too powerful for control, and, leaning her head on the arm of the sofa where she was sitting, she wept unrestrainedly and bitterly.

From this indulgence of her feelings she was roused by the voice of Mr. Grant, inquiring, in tones of surprise and concern—

"My dear Miss Mason, what is the matter? What has occurred to distress you?"

She looked up in much agitation; but too highly excited to make any attempt at concealment, she said, in broken tones—

"Mr. Grant, I must go home."

"Go home! You have had bad news from B., then. I am very sorry. Are your parents ill? Or what is it that requires your presence?"

"It is not that I am needed at home; but I cannot stay here any longer. Do not ask me why," she continued, weeping; "but I must leave you."

"Leave us! go away altogether! Nay, then, I *must* ask you why. I must know what has caused this sudden determination." And seating himself

beside her, he, after a time, succeeded in drawing from her the tale which had induced both her emotion and the resolve she had expressed.

The account was no less surprising to him than it had been to herself, and caused scarcely less pain; for he had never imagined that a wrong construction could be put upon the seclusion which his deep grief had induced. He sat for some time in pained and gloomy silence, thinking only of what he had heard, and forgetful of the effect it would exert on his domestic comfort should it drive Ella from his house; until, drying her tears, she said, more calmly—

"It will be better for me to go home as soon as possible, Mr. Grant. If you can procure some one to take my place"—

"To take your place, Miss Mason!" he said, starting from his reverie. "I cannot believe that you are serious. I cannot think that you will allow an idle tale like this to deprive my children of your care, and turn them a second time motherless upon the world."

"Do not urge me to remain," she replied, sadly; "it is not right for me to stay. God only knows how fearful a trial it will be to me to leave you all; but I *must* go."

"And why?" he asked. "I would willingly make any sacrifice to save you from the pain which has been so wantonly inflicted; but to go away will not silence the slander. Believe me, the best way will be utterly to disregard it, and it must ere long die of itself. If you leave us, you punish the innocent for the guilty; and what would my little ones do without you? You have been a mother to them since they lost their own, and none could take your place as you have taken hers."

"Let them go with me, then," she said, the tears again gushing from her eyes. "Let Anna and Henry at least go with me. The older ones will not miss my care so much; but give me Anna and Henry."

"You would take my children from me," he said, reproachfully, "the only objects which bind me to earth! No! no! my little ones shall never be separated from me but by death; and if you leave them—but I cannot think you will," he continued, earnestly. "Have you forgotten their mother's last request, and your own solemn promise to her who is now an angel in the world above? Forgive me," he added, in much emotion; "I had never thought to remind you of this; but I am pleading for my children, and every other consideration must give way to their welfare. Did you not promise my Anna *never* to forsake them? And can the wickedness of others absolve you from that vow?"

"I have thought of all this," she replied; "and, were the evil spoken of me alone, I would bear it all, though their words were sharper than arrows, sooner than forsake my trust. But they are slandering you; and, when the minister of God is defamed, the cause of Christ suffers. And you have stood so high, so far above suspicion, I cannot bear that a single shade should fall upon your name. Do not interrupt me," she continued, gathering energy as she proceeded; "I know what you would say: that even this consideration does not absolve me from my promise. But I act as she would have me act to whom my word was given. Her first thought was always for you; her first care to save you from sorrow or reproach; her greatest pride your spotless name, your extended usefulness. Do you suppose she would wish me to remain with her children at the expense of these? Oh no! I am confident she approves the course I am about to take, and knows the pain it costs me. If you will not let me take the children," and again her voice lost its firmness, and her countenance its composure, "if I am forced to break the letter of my promise, I will be true to its spirit; and God will not bring me into judgment for acting as I believe my duty to them, to you, and to the dead requires."

Mr. Grant listened in silence; and, as she concluded, and burying her face in her hands, strove in vain to conceal the tears which found their way between her slender fingers, he said, in a subdued tone—

"Your resolution is taken, then. It is useless to say more. And when will you go?"

"As soon as possible," she replied, without looking up or removing the hands which concealed her face.

With no further remark, he left her; and Ella, finding herself alone, gave free vent to the grief she had been trying to restrain. She was sobbing so bitterly, that she was not aware that any one was near her, until she felt herself encircled by the clasping arms of the children, and heard their words of childish surprise and sympathy.

Henry, her especial pet, had sprung upon the sofa, and, throwing one little arm round her neck, with the other drew away the curls which fell over her face, while Albert and Emily, the elder children, caught each of them a hand in both of theirs, exclaiming, "Do not go away, Aunt Ella!—don't leave us, Aunt Ella!" and little Anna, now almost two years old, was struggling in her father's arms and crying, as she strove to reach Ella, "Take Annie, Aunt El! take Annie!"

"Why did you do this?" she said, reproachfully, as she tried to release herself from the children's embrace. "It is cruel to add to my distress. Why *did* you bring them?"

"To bid you farewell," he replied, "if you will leave us."

"No! no!" cried Henry, clasping both arms round her, "Aunt Ella sha'n't go away!"

And Emily, a warm-hearted, sensitive child, threw herself across Ella's lap and wept loudly.

"I can bear this no longer!" she exclaimed, and, extending her arms, she received the baby from its father's embrace and hid her face amid its golden curls.

"Stay with us, Miss Mason," said Mr. Grant, in tones that would falter, despite his self-control;

"my children cannot live without you. For their sakes, and that of her who confided them to you, stay with us."

"I will!" she answered, with a sudden resolve. "You have conquered, Mr. Grant. I will not leave you, darlings. Dry your tears, Emily; Aunt Ella will not go away."

And, as she bent to raise the sobbing child still lying in her lap, Mr. Grant's hand was laid for an instant tenderly upon her head, and, for the first time in his life addressing her by that name, he uttered, fervently, "God bless you, Ella! God forever bless you!" and turned hastily from the apartment, to conceal the emotion he could no longer repress.

Left alone with the children, her assurances that she would stay with them soon quieted their fears, and changed their tears to smiles; and, after seeing them again in the nursery pursuing the happy employments which their father's hasty summons had interrupted, she retired to seek in solitude the strength she needed for the present and the future.

Weeks and months rolled on, and the slanderous reports which had so deeply pained Ella had, as Mr. Grant predicted, died of themselves. But their effect upon her had not ceased. Others might have forgotten them, but she could not forget; and a nervous dread of their renewal would, but for the determination with which she turned from it, have made her very miserable. All seemed as it had done, it was true, but the feeling of security which had made so large a portion of her happiness was gone; and, though to others she might appear as tranquil as before, there was a restlessness, a vague fear ever fluttering about her heart which she could not still.

Alas, poor girl! the agony caused by those tales, and by the thought that she must part with him, had shown her in the depths of that heart a feeling unsuspected by herself before, and had forced her, though with bitter tears and self-upbraidings, to acknowledge that she loved Mr. Grant as she had loved no other—as woman *can* love but *once*.

She never dreamed of a return; she believed that he would never love again; and her only thought was how to conquer, or at least disguise, her own deep affection. Yes, Ella Mason, once so certain that a second love, if it existed, could call forth no return, so positive that *her* heart could only be given in exchange for one which had enshrined no other image, now loved, with all the warmth of her nature, the widowed husband of her dearest friend.

"Yet not with earthly love, Father!—oh, not with earthly love!" she exclaimed often, as, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, she knelt before her God. "Yet is he dearer than a thing of earth should be! Oh, strengthen me to overcome this feeling! aid me to conceal!"

Some months had passed in this way, when, one evening, as she was retiring with the children at their usual hour, Mr. Grant said—

"Will you return to the parlor, Miss Mason, when you are at leisure? I wish a few moments' conversation with you."

Startled by the request, she merely bowed an assent; and, after seeing her little charge at rest, returned with trembling limbs to the parlor, where Mr. Grant awaited her. As she entered, he came forward to meet her, and led her to the sofa.

"Miss Mason," he said—"Ella, have I offended you?"

"Offended me, Mr. Grant! Oh no! Why should you think that you have offended me?"

"I have fancied that you were less frank and cordial in your manner, Ella, for some time. You have not talked to me so much nor so freely as you once did, and I feared that I had, I knew not how, grieved or pained you. If so, forgive me."

"Never, at any time or in any way, Mr. Grant. If I have given you cause to think so, it is I who should ask your forgiveness. I have been dull, perhaps, for I am not altogether well, and, for the first time in my life, am somewhat nervous; but offence in your house I never had cause for, and, I do assure you, never thought of."

"It is well," he said, musingly. "I am glad that it is so."

And a silence of some moments ensued, which to Ella seemed interminable, yet which she dared not break. At length Mr. Grant rose, and commenced walking the room; and, gathering courage, she, too, left her seat, saying—

"If you have nothing more to say to me, I will retire."

"No, Ella, sit down again. I have much more to say to you—much which I scarcely know how to begin." Then, taking her hand in his, as she still stood where his words had arrested her, he said, "Let me come to the point at once. You have long been as a mother to my children: Ella, will you be my wife?"

He paused; but Ella could not answer; her heart throbbed so that she could not speak, and she sank upon the sofa and covered her face. He sat down beside her, and gently strove to soothe her agitation—

"It is but a little while, Ella," he said, "since I deemed it possible to love any but my sainted Anna At the time when you spoke of leaving us, I was most indignant at the idea of another ever taking her place. Even now it is but the first place in a widowed heart that I can offer you; one that will never lose the memory of its early love. Yet I love you fondly, Ella; better than aught else on earth; and, if you will be mine, will strive earnestly to make you happy."

Still, Ella was silent; and, when he spoke again, his tone evinced much emotion—

"I fear I have pained you," he said; "I ought to have remembered that you were still too young to give your heart's first warmth of love to one who has so little to give you in exchange. Forgive me, Ella. If you cannot love me, at least forgive my folly. I will leave you now," he continued.

"Stay," she murmured; but so faintly that, in

his agitation, he did not hear it, and had left her side, when, raising her head, she exclaimed, more clearly, "Stay, I implore you. If I hesitated," she continued, rapidly, as he returned, his usually calm countenance much agitated—"if I hesitated, it was from no doubt of my own feelings, but of yours. Do you, indeed, love me?"

"Do you doubt it?" he replied, almost indignantly. "Why should I profess a love I did not feel? Do you think I would deceive you, Ella?"

"No! Oh no, I am sure you would not! And yet I cannot realize—it seems like a dream that you should love me." She pressed her hand over her eyes for a moment, and then placing it in his with something of the childlike confidence of former days, she said, though her tone was low and tremulous, "Mr. Grant, the least and lowest place in *your* heart is more valuable to me than the undivided love of any other!"

"Ella! dear Ella!" he said, as, overpowered by this simple acknowledgment, he clasped her in his arms, "as much as I can now love anything on earth I love you. You will be mine, then, Ella? I am no longer alone!"

No answering words were needed now; for, in that hour of joy, spirit communed with spirit, and each felt how deeply and sincerely the other loved.

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"Ella," said Aunt Hetty, with a quiet smile, after the first congratulations were over, and when, the bustle attendant upon the arrival of the bridal party having somewhat subsided, she and her niece were conversing a little apart, "George Sidney was married again last week."

"I am glad to hear it," replied Mrs. Grant, smiling and blushing as she met her aunt's significant look, and recollected her own words in relation to second marriages. "I hope he may be very happy."

"Happy! But are you not sorry for his wife? Is not a second marriage always a matter either of calculation or convenience? Must not every spark of romance or freshness of feeling be extinguished before such a thing can be thought of? Does not a heart require"—

"Aunt Hetty! Aunt Hetty!" interrupted her niece, in some confusion, "pray do not bring up all the nonsense of my girlhood against me. I was very silly then."

"And have grown wiser now, under Mr. Grant's auspices. Ah, Ella, was not I a true prophetess, dear?"

"To some extent you were, dear aunt. I have given my whole heart in exchange for a second love, and I am more than satisfied; but—there are very few men like Mr. Grant, and—and—please do not tell *him* how foolish I used to be."

SUSAN CLIFTON; OR, THE CITY AND THE COUNTRY.

BY PROFESSOR ALDEN.

(Concluded from page 305.)

CHAPTER XIX.

A LARGE concourse attended the funeral of Richard Clifton. The memory of his father was precious, and the pure heart and benevolent life of his mother caused many to shed the tear of sympathy over one of whose personal history they had but little knowledge. They knew that he had been successful in the struggle for wealth on the world's broad theatre, and that he had come home to his birth-place to die. When the preacher stated the grounds for hope that the prayers and instructions of his pious parents had not been lost upon the deceased; when he reported his testimony to the fact that all his experience of worldly success had not yielded true happiness; that he had at last found it by returning, like the prodigal, to his heavenly Father, there were tears of joy in many eyes.

Susan leaned upon the arm of Horace Larned, as the procession moved to the last resting-place of the dead. When the "dust had been committed to dust, ashes to ashes," they walked homeward in silence. Horace declined the invitation to enter the lonely homestead, though it was given with an earnestness which rendered the non-compliance an act of unkindness, at least such was its effect upon Susan. She would have all she loved by her side as she returned to the place whence one very dear to her had been borne to return no more.

In the course of a few days, the confidential legal adviser of the late Richard Clifton made his appearance. It was found that all the business relations of the deceased had been left in the most perfect order, and arrangements made, in anticipation of his decease, which rendered the task of settling the estate one of great simplicity. By his will, he had left to Mrs. Larned a sum sufficient to secure her from want, and to enable her to educate her son. With this exception, his whole fortune was bequeathed, in trust, to his brother Henry. One-half was to be paid over to Susan as soon as she was married, or became of age; the other half to be disposed of according to his brother's discretion.

Time passed on, but no change seemed to take place in the habits of Horace. He continued his mingled toils and studies. His visits to Susan were not less frequent, but he was silent in regard to his future purposes. A feeling of reserve and distance

MORAL COURAGE.

BY ALICE B. NEAL.

PART II.

"My heart's sympathies go with the woman who labors for herself. Through all the difficulties, the prejudices, and the disadvantages of pushing on her own course through life—who yet does it bravely and in sincerity—such a woman is a heroine."—*Letter from* MARY HOWITT.

WE all know how occupation will divert the mind from its greatest sorrows, and even Mrs. Burton felt this, as the preparations for removal were speedily made. It was constant pain, it is true, to look around upon the rooms so sacred to the memory of her happy domestic life; the very furniture was endeared to her by a thousand recollections, and she knew that no home could be to her what this had been. Lucy had many a pang at giving up her beloved pictures; a superb piano, a birthday gift from her father; and the many elegant trifles that her taste had gathered about her. And she, too, had inurned the ashes of a buried past, and the living sorrow was, at first, almost as great a weight as any that had fallen to her lot. It is no light thing to tear the heart from the object all its love has been centered on for years, to stifle every remembrance of past hope and confidence, to check its yearnings for a return of this sunshine, and resolutely close every avenue to its warmest sympathies. There was not an hour without something to remind her painfully of her lover. There were his gifts; and her eyes were blinded with thick gathering tears as she looked her last upon the pictured semblance of his face, and then bound them all together to be returned to him. The rich silks and delicate laces already purchased for her bridal must be disposed of; and, as she laid them aside, one by one, she could scarcely believe the miserable change real that had so suddenly darkened her life. Ah, it is hard to see such heavy sorrow falling on one so young and lovely, without questioning the All-Wise Providence of our Father in Heaven!

There, too, the children were to be consoled for the loss of many things that they had never known the want of. George must give up his horse, the companion of many a happy holiday, and his boyish heart suffered in the parting. Willie and Grace, it is true, were so delighted to be of use that, after a few tears, they were quite cheerful again, and chose the books they liked best from their large juvenile library, and packed them and the playthings they were to retain with a great show of being bustling and industrious.

At last everything was ready for a removal; and Lucy needed all her strength and fortitude to support her mother and reconcile her to the new abode, the best their limited means would allow them. It was one of those neat small dwellings that have lately been planned for the comfort of those in moderate means, with a cheerful-looking parlor, furnished with the plainer articles of their old home, a few choice engravings, and Lucy's guitar, which was all that she would take beyond the actual necessities of life. It was in a back street, it is true, and far from all former associations; but this was rather in its favor, Lucy thought, and she did not care for neighbors, so they were honest and respectable people.

Mrs. Burton drew down the blinds the instant they were in the carriage; and Lucy and George, each unknown to the other, vowed in their hearts that, if their hopes were realized, their first act should be to restore the home of their early childhood to the mother who now felt the parting so bitterly. Many days, and even weeks, passed, before any of the family could become accustomed to the new life that they had entered upon. The rooms seemed so small, and the services of one domestic were not sufficient for the many demands that at first were thoughtlessly made upon her time. Then there was the watching the actual outlay of dollars and cents, something Mrs. Burton had never been accustomed to in the lavish expenditures of her former home, and she missed the daily excitement of visiting or receiving visitors—the idle morning drive—the lounge at Levy's counters. As for visitors, not a single card was left for more than a month after their removal. Then there were a few scattered callers from among those they had been most intimate with, some of whom lifted their rich dresses almost contemptuously as they entered the narrow street; but, after a time, even this was ended, and the Burton family, save a few dear friends, truly so, were buried to most of their acquaintances—as little missed or remembered in the circle where they had once been courted and caressed, as their dead father from the eager barterers upon 'Change, where he had lately held so influential a position.

And, all this time, Lucy's own experience had prepared her for the change, and to spare her mother's feelings as much as possible when she complained of this heartlessness and neglect. She had only waited until they were settled in their new home to carry out her designs, for immediate action was necessary. The annuity of which we have spoken—two hundred a year—paid their rent. The sale of the furniture had also been secured to them, and this, together with a not inconsiderable sum

realized by parting with the ornaments which Lucy, as well as Mrs. Burton, had been plentifully supplied with, would keep the family from want for a year or more. Meantime, Lucy hoped to be able to be independent in her earnings, at least if resolution and patient industry would achieve the object.

Who could describe the dreary, sensitive shrinking with which she entered upon her first day of toil? She had never found herself in the street at such an early hour before; and, after a hurried walk, she was ushered into a large work-room, in which some twenty girls, of all ages and appearance, were gathering. They eyed her curiously, for some of them had seen her in the show-room, and had envied her perchance as she stepped from the carriage dressed in a tasteful and elegant costume. Now she was attired more like themselves, in a plain dark mousseline, with a ribbon or an ornament. It seemed as if Mrs. Hill would never arrive; for Lucy felt all the impertinence and vulgarity of their gaze; and the half-whispered remarks, and bursts of laughter which now and then came to her ear, she had no doubt were aimed at her, as they glanced at her white, ungloved hands and delicate figure. Mrs. Hill's entrance was like a ray of sunlight. Her welcome was most cordial, and the girls instantly saw that the new-comer was to be treated with consideration and respect. It was quite a relief, after this ordeal, to be sitting quietly in a pleasant corner of the room with her first task in her hand, the intricacies of which she was occupied in conquering; and yet we must confess that her step was heavy as she returned home, with thought and weariness, and her walk was lengthened by more than one square, so that the traces of involuntary tears might disappear from her face. The prospect of constant contact with natures so foreign to her own disheartened her, and shadows like the sun-clouds that rise in the west on a dreary winter's evening seemed to close around her.

It was difficult to throw aside this despair, or rather to conceal it, as she entered her mother's room; but Mrs. Burton looked up with an animated face, for she began to feel how much Lucy had sacrificed, and was resolved that she would conquer her foolish aversion to the plan which promised at least domestic peace. Besides, there was good news. Dr. Howard had just called in to tell her that he had secured a place in a counting-house for George, with what was, for the first effort, a liberal salary, quite enough for his own maintenance and to pay Willie's school bills.

Grace was to study at home; and as Lucy sat that evening, with her darling sister's bright face raised to hers in eager inquiry upon the lesson she was industriously preparing, and watched the happiness of George and Willie talking over some favorite scheme at the window, she felt quite repaid for the day's annoyances, in the thought that all these dear ones were secured the comfort and independence of their own home

Yet many a cold, dark morning her heart sank within her, as she mounted the long flights of stairs to the work-room, and saw those same dull or impertinent glances, that she had shrunk from at first, watching her entrance. By and by, she became to distinguish them apart, and to know who she could turn to for the assistance or instruction that was sometimes necessary in the absence of their director; for they were not all coarse or ill-natured, and she soon began to exchange kindly greetings with many of them as she encountered the laughing, sauntering groups coming to their daily tasks. When they found that she did not hold herself coldly aloof, they became more kind and gentle; and, though she never gossiped or jested with them, they soon came to love her and show a consideration she had not expected from them. Mrs. Hill's quick eyes soon discovered the influence of her quiet, industrious example in the work-room, and felt how much she and her apprentices were losing when the drudgery of Lucy's probation was over, and she resolved to remove her to a more congenial atmosphere.

The young girl had never felt the same delight and triumph on hearing her magnificent voice and execution praised in a crowded drawing-room, as she experienced one morning in holding up for Mrs. Hill's inspection some tasteful article of dress she had completed.

"See, Mrs. Hill, is not the effect of that trimming charming?" she said. "It just occurred to me, the idea, and it is quite my own."

"Finished neatly, too," said her good friend, well pleased at the success of her *protégée*, as she noticed the color mount to Lucy's face in her eagerness, "in the most workmanlike style. Why, we shall have nothing to teach you soon, Miss Burton."

That same afternoon, she joined Lucy on her walk homewards, and told her that her assistant in the show-room was to be married in a few weeks, and, although there were already several applicants for the place, she would offer it to her first of all. "The wages"—she did not even conceal realities under the more gracious term of "salary"—"would be nearly double those she could otherwise receive; her duties would be lighter and more varied."

Of course, you will say she could not hesitate to accept so kind an offer.

I do not think she did, or that she was ungrateful to Mrs. Hill for her kindness; and yet it was a moment or two before she spoke, and then her voice trembled as she thanked her employer. But hurried thoughts passed through her mind that another ordeal, and one even more repugnant to her feelings, was about to commence. Actual contact and association with those she had once met under what different circumstances! It may be thought weakness in one who had already shown so much resolution; but it was a sad evening, the more so that Willie was smarting beneath the taunting words of a schoolmate, who had called him "beggar," in

a boyish quarrel, and George seemed brooding over the hopes that necessity had compelled him to relinquish.

The path of duty, even where smoothed by patient self-denial, has, after all, its harsh and rugged passes.

It was only the bursting out of a bright flame from the hearth—so slight a thing—that restored Lucy to her wonted cheerfulness. And then she thought, "How very happy I ought to be!—how very ungrateful I am!—when so many of those poor girls go to comfortless homes or lonely lodgings, and here is mother with her loving face, and Grace's dear head upon my knee, and this bright, cheerful firelight dancing upon my books, dear unchanged friends! And there is my poor neglected guitar." So she rose and threw its dark ribbon across her shoulder and played a lively air, that set Grace and Willie to dancing, and made poor dependent George forget his melancholy and echo their merry bursts of laughter.

Mrs. Burton had not remained unchanged while all this time was passing. You would scarcely have recognized the pale, tearful widow in the busy, contented housekeeper, that now not only overlooked her servant's duties, but shared in the details of domestic life. She found a willing and active assistant in Grace, who was too young to be troubled by the world's neglect, so that Effie Howard came frequently to see her. After all, it was as happy a little household, taking every circumstance into consideration, as could readily be found, and much more than it could have been had they been able to indulge the constant gloomy recollection of the loss of their father, surrounded by objects that would have recalled him every hour in the day, and with no necessity for exertion pressing upon them.

Lucy's new duties commenced with the Spring opening. She had assisted to prepare the beautiful things that were displayed upon the various stands in their most tempting light, and now her first experience as saleswoman was at hand. She glanced about the room, and could but remember how often she had entered it with a heedless, careless heart, on the errand of a purchaser, paying sums, that now seemed enormous to her, for the fashion of a day, without a thought; and how she had been flattered and complimented upon her exquisite taste—that taste which was now made subservient to the caprices of others—by her generous father, or the admiring lover, who was never weary of dwelling upon the beauty of his betrothed. She was startled from her reverie by the depth of a sigh which rose from her own heart; and kind Mrs. Hill understood it all, and placed her hand encouragingly upon Lucy's shoulder, as she said—

"Remember, it is better to have the worst first."

So Lucy was brave and calm, and self-possessed, when one after another of the giddy throng she so well remembered came crowding around Mrs. Hill's dainty caps and bonnets, some starting when they saw her thus, and others assuming a cold unconsciousness that they had ever met her under other circumstances. For her story was well known, and had been talked over and wondered at, and she had been ridiculed and misinterpreted in various ways, for the amusement of those who had once called themselves her friends. They could not be openly insulting, when they looked in her calm, self-respectful face, while making their idle comments on the novelty or grace of the fashion she was recommending to them. She returned the distant bows vouchsafed to her as coldly as they were given, and felt her native dignity increased by every rudeness she experienced. And who would dare to say that she was not the equal of those giddy creatures, reared in expensive idleness, without an aspiration above dress and fashion, or a dream of life's responsibility? They were clothed, and warmed, and fed without a thought on their indebtedness to the parent who was toiling with anxiety, if not with labor of the hands, for their enjoyment; they were blind to the beauty of unselfishness, and deaf to the claims of the suffering and needy upon the income they recklessly squandered. And Lucy knew all this; and the contempt of such as these could do no more than call a flush to her brow.

Sometimes she would turn quickly to answer a familiar voice asking, "What did you say was the price of this?" and an involuntary smile of recognition would for a moment play upon her lips, to fade as quickly: and again she could scarcely conceal her contempt, as some one who had fawned upon Mrs. Burton in her days of affluence for an invitation to her parties, or an introduction to her set, would inquire, with drawling, patronizing tone, "Ah, how is your mamma, my dear? Where has she buried herself?"

But this morning, like many another that had seemed interminable, drew to a close, and Lucy, wearied with the inane conversation, and watching the hollowness of many whom she had never suspected of hypocrisy before, laid aside the glittering ribbons and silks she had been surrounded with, thankful to Mrs. Hill for calling her away to take the address of some of the customers. As she bent over the desk, turned from a group that had last entered, a familiar name fell upon her ear, making her hand tremble so that the lines were scarcely legible, while she listened spell-bound.

"It 's true," said one of them, gayly; "I had it direct. It makes as much talk as breaking his engagement did last year. Wasn't he a noble fellow to offer to provide for all that family! and what an ungrateful creature Lucy Burton was to refuse him, when he begged and pleaded, I 'm told! No wonder her uncles have cut her. I saw her cousin Isabel only last Tuesday, who says her father won't even allow them to speak since."

"What ever became of her? She was reduced to a governess, or something of that sort, wasn't she?"

"Oh, worse than that. Why, I 've certainly

been told that she 's one of Mrs. Hill's sewing girls. Perhaps she made this bonnet, who knows? Pride must have a fall! But about James Allan?"

"Oh, only he 's engaged again to Florence Fisher—the blue hat, if you please—and both families are delighted. It 's a splendid match in every way, and I expect they will have a superb wedding. I never could see, for my part, how he came to fancy Lucy Burton."

"Nor I—what a lovely color that ribbon is!—I guess he was not broken-hearted. I met them together in Walnut Street yesterday. I knew her velvet cloak—isn't it sweet?—and I 'm told he has ordered diamonds for a wedding present."

Ah, little thought the speaker, her beautiful mouth

"Curvèd, like the archer's bow,
To send the bitter arrow out,"

the effect of this idle gossip upon the object of their comments, who rose, and then sat down again, covering her face with her trembling hands until they had passed from the room. Then she finished her duties mechanically, folded the laces, and laying aside the beautiful flower wreaths, so mocking in their loveliness to her heavy eyes, all the while with a pang of pain in her heart, worse than she had suffered since the first agony of separation. It was something she had not counted on; and she was so unprepared for it! Shut out from her former associates, she was not in the way of hearing the prevailing gossip which ushers in an engagement in certain sets. Mary Howard was the only one who could have known it, and, by a tacit agreement, the name of James Allan had never been mentioned between them since the day of their separation. It was only natural, only what she might have expected, she said to herself many times that afternoon. What was he to her, after all?—and yet the old tenderness for a moment bowed her spirit, and it was hard to know that another had so soon claimed the fond attentions with which he had once surrounded her.

But not even to Mary did she confide what she had learned; nor did Mrs. Burton know it until, some two months after, the announcement of the marriage caught her eye under its appropriate head in a morning paper. She was surprised and indignant, and exclaimed—

"Why, Lucy, James Allan is married! and, of all things, to that haughty Florence Fisher you disliked so much!"

She wondered still more, and was deceived, as many a careful mother has been, in thinking that her daughter had conquered any feeling she might once have had; for Lucy put her cup quietly on the table and said—

"Yes, I have known of the engagement some time."

Ah, there was much truth in Mrs. Hill's homely comforting, "It is better to have the worst first;" and Mrs. Burton never knew that Lucy had encountered the bridal train at the very church door had seen the fond devotion of the newly-made husband, and the proud beauty of the bride. Still more, she had met the gaze of James Allan for the first time, as he stood with his hand on the carriage-door giving some directions to the coachman; for the first time since that gentle appeal to his truth and honor, when he had shaken her off so rudely; but her cheek did not blanch, or her gaze betray any recognition, though he started, as if from a sudden thrill of pain, and, in a moment more, the carriage had borne him away. She wondered how she could be so calm as she pursued her walk; but it was the calmness of a heart set upon a higher than earthly love—one that "knows no variableness, nor the shadow of turning."

Afterwards, she frequently saw them together, driving or walking, as she went more cheerfully to what had become a pleasant occupation, and she often heard ladies speak of Mrs. Allan's superb parties, or the gay and brilliant life she was leading at watering-places. Lucy never envied her; for she felt in her inmost soul that no pleasure could be purer than that which she now enjoyed in the happiness of her beloved home, and the faithful discharge of her duties. She was a favorite with every one in the work-room, and many of them came to her as a friend and counselor in their trials and discouragements. She possessed Mrs. Hill's unbounded confidence, and the respect of those whose good opinion was worth caring for.

She was older now—far older in appearance than years. There was a gentle thoughtfulness in her face that made her more lovely than ever, Dr. Howard declared; and Mary, now settled in her own happy home, and Mary's husband, regarded her as a dear friend and sister. Finally, Mrs. Hill's long talked of resolution to give up business was put into effect, and every one seemed to consider it exactly right and proper that Miss Burton should succeed her; and thus, five years from the time she first entered the establishment, she became its head, an active, energetic woman of business.

In these days of constant discussion upon the rights and duties of women, I am afraid my heroine has but favor in the eyes of those opposed to so-called social reforms, by my last assertion. But Lucy Burton had not stepped out of her sphere in the prosecution of her scheme. There was nothing coarse or bustling in her activity; western merchants involuntarily took off their hats on entering her presence, and fashionable ladies were, for once in their lives, civil to a "shopwoman." There is nothing in promptitude and regularity of accounts inconsistent with good breeding, nor do taste and the ability to make it available border upon masculine assumption. No one would have dreamed of inviting her to address a "Woman's Rights Convention," though she had her accounts at bank, and with many a flourishing French importer. Nor do we mean to say that this firmness and dignity of character were achieved at once, or without many a heart-burning, many a struggle with herself, and

oftentimes fearful despondency. But then there was the bright side of the picture, prosperity attending all their little plans, health, pleasant intercourse with a few dear friends, and, withal, that "peace which the world *cannot* give." She was now able to place Grace at an excellent school, where her companions gave a new interest and variety to the young girl's life; and the thought of "sister Lucy's self-denial," which she now began to appreciate, and the approbation which awaited her, quickened ambition and excited industry. Willie had assumed, with hearty zeal, the place vacated by George in the counting-house, while the student took up his books again with far more resolution and success than if he had never been parted from them. So we leave the family five years from their father's death, to meet them again when five—yes, fifteen more have flown.

It is in the old parlor of her early home that we find Lucy Burton once more. Still Lucy Burton, though her fair hair is not so abundant, and her figure has long since lost the grace and slenderness of girlhood. It was a dreary autumn evening without, but all within was peace and happiness. The room was plainly but tastefully furnished; a heaped-up fire was glowing through the bars of the grate, and the soft spell of the red twilight brought dreams of the past to the muser at the fireside. It was her birthday. Thirty-nine years since she came to be "a well-spring of pleasure" in that very house. She looked around the room; it was associated with her first recollections. How she had bounded through the door when her father's footsteps sounded in the hall; had sat at her mother's feet and wondered at the baby-beauty of her little brother. But the scenes grew darker as they came before her eyes; and then she turned to the long, long years she had been exiled thence. How could she ever be thankful enough for the kind watchful care that had led her to the fulfilment of her dearest earthly wishes? The prosperity which had enabled her so recently to restore their mother to her old home, the happiness of Grace, now the wife of one she loved as a brother, Willie's patient gentleness when that sad illness checked all his hopes and made him a sufferer for life, and the wonderful success of George, who had also realized many a day-dream. How could she ever be thankful enough? "And if I have trials still in store," she thought, "still direct my paths." But what trial could come?

Was there no unsatisfied yearning in her heart? no wish for closer sympathy than that of mother or sister? no regret for what might have been?

True, society was open to her now. She was wooed where she had once met insult; for it was said she had won not only competence, but fortune, and that was magic where her beauty of character and intelligence had not prevailed. And she had the gift to love her friends aright, to distinguish between the tares and the wheat in the great field of the world. She was happy in knowing that she had won much true sympathy. But was there not a dearness wanting to that earnest, affectionate heart?

What thought brought that growing mist before her eyes, as her hand shaded them from the firelight? Ah, it was here also that she had known her first and last love-dream. There she had often seen him stand—did you think, ye worldly ones, that years could have retained that memory so vividly? And now he *also* was alone. The dust of death had long since settled on the beautiful eyes of Florence Allan, and—

She turned with a quick, startled movement. There was a stranger ushered into the room: no, not a stranger, for his feet were familiar to the threshold; and, though changed by years, with dark locks whitening slowly to silver, James Allan could not be mistaken.

"Lucy!"

And he came near to her, so near that she almost felt his breath upon her forehead, and would have taken her hand; but she drew back coldly, and asked him to be seated, as if he had been a common acquaintance—as if her heart had not held his image when he entered.

"No, let me kneel to you rather, Lucy; kneel and ask your pardon, though years have passed since I wronged you so deeply. I cannot think of courtesy; I cannot commence cautiously and gradually upon what I have to say. *Lucy—will* you not speak to me?"

How strangely it thrilled her, even then, to hear that voice speak her name!

"Mr. Allan," she answered, still standing apart, "you are forgetting yourself."

"Forgetting everything, Lucy, but those old days and *you*. I could never forget you, though I have striven, and shut you out from my heart for another love; but no, I could not shut you out; you were always there, good and pure and beautiful."

She leaned upon the mantel and covered her face with her hands; she made no motion, spoke no word to check him.

"I was young and proud; and, God forgive me, I have suffered"—

"I forgive you, then, James"—

There seemed hope in her words; at least in the lingering accent of his name she had hesitated to pronounce. He came still nearer.

"Will you not believe me?—will you not listen to me? As I came from the altar, I met you like a calm accusing spirit. I have never forgotten that look. It has haunted me ever—ever; and now I am free once more, and let me hope—will you not let me hope that I may yet win your confidence—your love—here, where you once promised to be my wife? I am a desperate wooer, Lucy."

She looked at him in amazement. The proud, worldly man was bowed by a torrent of uncontrolled emotion. She could but feel that it was unfeigned. It was the same passionate impetuousness she so well remembered of old.

"Is it that so many years have passed, time has

changed me so, that you will not see I am pouring out my heart at your feet? I know my words are more befitting a rash boy; but I was ever hasty, and let that plead for me. Ever wild and ungovernable. But I am not old—*you* are not old. Speak to me, Lucy!"

"You cannot forget," she said, slowly and sadly, "that here, in this very room, I said 'God bless you!' when we parted. Since then there has been scarce a day that I have not asked for that blessing upon you and yours."

"Thou angel!"—he murmured rather than spoke.

"You have no forgiveness, then, to sue for. What more would you have me say?"

"Much more: that you have loved me through all; that all this dreary past shall be forgotten; that you will be my own even yet, Lucy! Oh, you must remember how very happy we were then! how we planned and dreamed of the future! All this can yet be realized; there are many years left for the expiation!"

He saw that she was moved. With all his vehemence, he could feel that *the past* was still a spell of mighty power.

"I would have spared you this," she said, again speaking sadly. "I feel intensely all the pain I must inflict. Yet you have mistaken me. I loved what I fancied I saw was noble in your heart and life; my idol became clay before my face. It was no light word when I said I would never be your wife."

"But you have never given my place to any one; you have been and are free, Lucy."

"Because I have feared another awaking. I have cherished no love dreams, but not that they have been shut out by tenderness for you. I cannot separate love from unbounded confidence and respect. It is not my nature to trust when once betrayed. No, by the sorrows of the past, as you have invoked its happiness, I will be your true friend as ever; nothing more."

That strange, stormy interview was at an end. She stood where he had left her, bewildered by the suddenness, the wildness of what had passed. She had rejected that love for which her affectionate nature yearned; had put aside all thoughts of that shielded domestic life she had often coveted. But she knew she was right in this; for, as she had said, with her respect and love were inseparable, and she could not respect one who had once so betrayed his manhood. Ah, this was the trial! and she could not doubt that she had received the direction she had prayed for.

There was a patter of childish feet upon the stairs, and a beautiful little girl came dancing into the room, tossing her light curls in affected anger at her nurse, and springing to Lucy's arms.

"Dear Aunt Lucy!" said the little fairy, laying her bright head in an affectionate, loving caress upon her shoulder. And Lucy pressed her closely—her brother's child—and felt that there was many a dear tie to life, though the love of husband and children were denied her. So she went on her beautiful way, more humbly perchance for that last trial, but still thoughtful for others, and still grateful for the many proofs she had received of the loving kindness of her Father in Heaven.

"*In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and he will direct thy paths*;" for what is here written has its noble counterpart in real, actual life.

THE LITTLE FAMILY.

BY KATE BERRY.

(*See Plate.*)

"And pray, Mr. Mervin, where have you left Matilda?" said that gentleman's better half, as he entered the parlor, one pleasant June morning; and, while she turned the pages of the last new novel, a somewhat sorrowful look was bestowed on his dusty habiliments.

"Out with the rabbits, my dear," he briefly replied, throwing his goodly person, with a nonchalant air, into a rocking-chair, and beginning to cool himself by means of his broad-brimmed straw hat.

"Forever with those vile rabbits," said Mrs. Mervin, sitting upright with a motion of unusual energy. "The child will be entirely spoilt. It 's not half an hour since Bridget braided Matilda's hair and dressed her for the day, so that she need not be the fright which, thanks to you, she has been at this place. I am ashamed to have her seen by company."

"What harm will it do if her dress does get a little disordered?" inquired her husband, in a provokingly quiet manner.

"What harm, Mr. Mervin? Why, just this; that she is becoming a perfect romp, and cares more for boys' play than for anything else. What progress, I 'd be glad to know, is she to make in her music this summer, when she has no teacher, and must practice at least six hours a day, if all her mornings are spent in this idle way?"

"Not much progress, I dare say," he replied, "in polkas and waltzes on the piano; but I think she will perform a few in the fields and garden that will give her such a stock of health as shall carry her through a city winter."

"Those old-fashioned, countryfied ideas of yours over again! I never could train her as I wished in the city; and, now that we are fairly out here, you must have it all your own way, and make her as coarse as a dairy-maid. I do wish that you would remember she is not to be brought up like a backwoods girl, and forget, at the same time, that you are a farmer's son." Mrs. Mervin was evidently getting excited.

"There is no prospect of my forgetting what my father was; you are so obliging as to remind me of it too often for that." And Mr. Mervin continued to keep quite cool, both in the outer and inner man; the former process being facilitated by a gentle fanning. "And bring Matilda up as a backwoods girl I shall—that is, if I can have my way. I would much rather she should never know a note of music, or take a stitch of—what do you call it?—crochet, than grow up, as most young ladies do nowadays with round shoulders and a pale face."

"And I, sir," said the wife, waxing warm, "prefer to have her accomplished and refined, like those in whose society she is expected to move."

"And so she must spend six hours a day at the piano, which she fairly hates, trying to learn an accomplishment for which she has no taste, and will forget before she is twenty-five; that is, if she marries. Do I understand you, my dear?" And Mr. Mervin glanced, in a mock inquisitive manner, towards the lady.

"There is no use in arguing with you," she exclaimed; and, ringing the bell, she desired Bridget to bring Miss Matilda to the house.

Let us follow Bridget to the rear of the garden, where, in a green inclosure, surrounded by rabbits of all ages and sizes, sits the unconscious subject of her parents' bickering, occupying herself infinitely to her own satisfaction. She is feeding a juvenile member of the family with a tender cabbage leaf, suited to its infant powers of digestion, while the more advanced inhabitants of the pen are regaling themselves on carrots, manifesting greater attention to the maxim of "each one for himself" than comports with politeness. She feeds, fondles, chases, and scolds each one by turns, gladly oblivious of music and crochet work, till the voice of Bridget calls her from that pleasant little world of her own to a sense of the trials and vexations that await a return to the house.

"Plase, miss, yer mother wants ye just to step into the parlor."

"Dear me!" cried the poor child, "I was hoping ma wouldn't find out, in ever so long, where I was." And she looked with affright at her soiled muslin dress, then thrust her fingers through her shining brown hair, and asked Bridget if any of the corn-colored bows were lost out of the braids?

Bridget assured her that "niver a one was gone;" at which piece of information Matilda declared herself highly rejoiced, "Ma would scold so if she should drop them off in the rabbit-pen." Then, hugging and squeezing her mute companions all round, she reluctantly followed the lengthened strides of the servant through the garden. Before reaching the house, her downcast countenance lighted up with a gleeful expression as she recollected that her father did not go to town that day; and, running to overtake Bridget, she told the sympathizing child of Erin that "her pa would take her part, she knew he would."

Mr. and Mrs. Mervin sat moodily, as we left them, when Matilda made her appearance, at first peering timidly in at the door, then, taking courage

at the sight of her father, she entered gayly and began an animated account of the various performances in the rabbit-pen, with a description of the peculiarities of some individual members of the little community. She was interrupted by her mother—

"And a pretty condition you are in to be seen in the parlor, after your play! Just look at those grass stains on your dress!"

"Sure enough," said Mr. Mervin, advancing to the door; "and we 'll 'see something green' besides those, and stand a chance to have them extricated by briars: so come, Matty." And, desiring her to fetch her sun-bonnet, they sallied forth on a long ramble in the wood.

Such scenes as the above were of almost daily occurrence at the summer residence of the Mervins; and, as now, the husband usually had the last word, the wife giving in, with a sullen, ungracious acquiescence, to the plans of one who generally had sense and reason on his side, and always an indomitable will. So that the youthful Matilda, while gaining a vigorous physical constitution under the tutelage of her father, and subject incessantly to the absurd opposition of her mother, stood a very fair chance of losing that most sacred guard of a daughter's moral well-being, the sentiment of respect for the latter parent.

Mrs. Mervin had been reared in the city by a weak but very "genteel" mother, and, before the age of twenty, had married her father's head clerk, now so prosperous as to be the owner of a country house. I cannot say, though I fully endorse his views as to the employments of growing young ladies, that he was as considerate as he should have been towards his wife's failings, or that he made himself sufficiently persuasive by a judicious blandness, when sustaining an argument with a woman whose errors were the result of a false education. He was not different from the majority of men in the lack of these qualities. And here I am tempted to moralize, as reflections on the unhappy influence of such differences between parents upon the hearts and minds of their children are suggested. But I forbear indulging them at present, beyond a passing allusion, and will proceed with our story, which, after all, as the reader will discover, is not much of one, having, as we in the north say, "no *nub*."

Left to herself, Mrs. Mervin, after giving audience to some uncharitable thoughts on the departed pair, whom she had no desire to accompany, considering it a bore to walk in the country, returned to her novel, and soon forgot all petty annoyances in following the fortunes of its hero and heroine.

Meantime, Matilda, at her father's side, wandered far away into the old wood, tearing her dress and losing her corn-colored ribbons, quite to his satisfaction.

"Pa," said she, "when I am a woman, my little girl shall play with rabbits, and run in the fields just as much as she likes."

To which expression of her intentions as to her future course, Mr. Mervin gave a hearty assent. It is to be hoped that Matilda will not forget to act upon her childish resolution.

As fervently, too, will we hope that Mr. Mervin's strong sense and kind heart will shortly lead him to adopt a more coaxing way towards the not unimpressible woman who is his wife, and that a summer in the country will have so modified her views that, when another spring arrives, she will not only provide stouter dresses for Matilda's rural plays and rambles, but will herself share in and encourage them. By which means, she will not merely add to her own health and contentment, but regain the lover-like attentions of her first wedded days, as well as secure that hold upon her child's affectionate heart that a sensible, though not sufficiently discriminating, husband has unwittingly assisted in weakening.

So, for the present, we will leave the young mistress of the little family, trusting that, when she reaches that period where (most truly womanlike) her expectations point, the sky may be as fair and the flowers bloom as brightly in her path as now while she frolics with her pets. But, as her lot is woman's, and therefore one of trial and anxiety, as outward prosperity cannot make her sunshine, nor a world's praises strew her way with flowers, pray we that her sunshine may be the inward "light of holy thoughts;" that her blossoms may be found in fadeless affections and undying truth; that, with a heart unchilled by worldliness or fashion's ways, she may move, self-forgetful as now, among the flock that will look up to her fair face to read the love-smile, and to her gentle hand for guidance.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DENOUEMENT.

"Hope is brightest when it dawns from fears."

"DOCTOR, how do you find my poor little niece, Mrs. Carlton, this morning?" said Mrs. Eaton.

"No better, no better; heart sick, Mrs. Eaton. Medicines do little good in such cases."

"You still recommend traveling?"

"Yes, madam."

"A sea voyage?"

"I should say it promised to be beneficial."

"To France?"

"Yes, take her to Paris; let her see the friends of her late husband, and hear their praises of his character. Such things awaken the current of life and its thoughts; if you can arouse these, the mother will triumph in her heart, and she will strive to become reconciled to the dispensation of Providence, and to life for her child's sake."

"A Christian should always be reconciled," remarked Mrs. Eaton.

"True; but Christians need motives to obedience; and, in cases of severe affliction, these motives should be placed in the most touching light. Pardon me, madam; I know I am only repeating your sentiments; those, indeed, which I have learned from your own lips and life."

"Oh. doctor, you have probed me to the quick! I am the selfish one, the unreconciled. I did not repine that the affections of my niece were given to Mr. Carlton. I felt that she ought to love her husband better than any other earthly friend. But I cannot bear that the whole heart of my precious child should be buried in the grave of her husband; I want her to turn to me."

"And so she will, madam, as soon as this torpor of grief is, in some measure, removed."

"Dear Emily!" said Mrs. Eaton, greatly moved. "She shall go to Paris. I will conquer myself. I will talk to her of her husband; he was an excellent man, and worthy her love. There! there! Is not that he? Merciful Heaven, my prayers are heard! It is Charles!"

* * * * * *

"I sent you a long letter the day before I left Paris, detailing all the reasons which induced me to go to Constantinople; and stating also the probability that you might not receive another letter, or hear from me, till I had the blessed privilege of thus assuring you of my health and happiness;" and Charles Carlton alternately kissed the pale lip of his wife and the rosy cheeks of his boy, as they were both encircled in his arms.

"The letter never reached me; and, Charles, you cannot know how this silence distressed me."

"I see it, I feel it too well, my own love. If I had anticipated your affliction, not all the bright prospects held out by Mr. Dupin would have weighed a feather. I would have come to you."

"Oh, never think of it, Charles. It is over; you are here, and I shall soon be well; and then how happy we will be! You must not leave me again."

"Never, never! I have money enough, besides paying all my creditors, except Mr. Halford, who has voluntarily relinquished his claim, to begin business again for myself. We shall know how to estimate our blessings, how to enjoy them. We will live for domestic happiness, for social improvement, for religious duties."

"But never again, my husband, for fashionable display."

"Never, Emily."

THE FATE OF A FLIRT IN THE OLDEN TIME.

A REAL INCIDENT.

BY MRS. E. F. ELLET.

LOOKING over a Philadelphia magazine, published in 1791, I was somewhat amused by an article therein, censuring severely the indolence and fine-ladyish manners of the women of that day, and contrasting the enervating habits of modern refinement with the simplicity, frugality, and industry of their grandmothers. At the present time, *we* look back with regret to the good old times complained of by that same censor, and regard the very matrons whom he stigmatizes as idle, vain, and frivolous, as models of excellent housewifery and industrious management—in short, as the very realization of Solomon's ideal picture. No doubt, as we recede into the past, we shall find, in successive generations, similar examples of veneration for a bygone age at the expense of the present; similar instances of contrast, in which the verdict is always in favor of those who have passed from the stage of action. In the next age, probably, we matrons of the present day shall have our turn of being held up as ensamples for the imitation of our juvenile descendants; shall serve to illustrate the virtues of a past generation, to be emulated, though scarcely equaled, by those who shall come after us. Praises lavished upon us shall then give point to the lectures of busy reformers, who reprove the faults of the female world. It is according to the established rule of things that so it should be.

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Now, although much of this is certainly to be attributed to the universal propensity to prize to the worth that which is gone, rather than that which is in possession, it cannot be denied that, in some re-

spects, the world does degenerate as it grows old. It would require a philosophical dissertation, with no little historical and statistical knowledge, to point out all the matters in which we stand lower than our ancestors, and in which those who "catch the manners living as they rise" are ready to acknowledge that society deteriorates day by day. I shall not undertake the task, in which the experience and observation of each individual would be a more reliable guide in forming a judgment. An incident, however, which throws a strong light upon the manners of the olden time, may have a bearing on the question, and suggest inquiry to the philosophical as to the effect of luxury and refinement on the manners of a community. The story was related to me almost upon the spot where the occurrence took place, and is confirmed in all its particulars by the recollection of "the oldest inhabitant."

Some eighty years ago, the now flourishing town of E——, on the Delaware, was but a small settlement in one of the remote and comparatively wild portions of Pennsylvania. At the present day, the compactly built town fills the space between the mountains and the two rivers that here form a junction, while their banks are lined with busy manufactories and the dwellings of men. The lofty hills that rise abruptly from the plain, or overhang the waters, are cultivated in spots; and the patches of woodland here and there seem spared for the purpose of adorning the landscape, and affording secluded walks to the wanderers who love the beauty of nature. At the period to which our tale carries us back, the scenery of this beautiful region was not less enchanting, though far more wild and savage. A dense forest then covered the mountains to their rocky summits, and bordered the rivers for many miles; the valley, through which flows a sweet stream to mingle with the Delaware, was dark with the shadow of primeval woods, and the waters, untroubled by the different manufactories for the uses of which their streams have since been diverted, swept in calm majesty along their time-worn channel, scarcely knowing the difference of seasons. Not far from the Delaware, a double row of low-roofed, quaint-looking stone houses formed the most populous part of the settlement. Other dwellings, scattered about in different directions, were built in the same style, and evidently inhabited by the same sturdy and primitive Dutch population. Many of these houses are still standing, and give a character to the appearance of the whole place. It has been often remarked how unchangingly, from one generation to another, the habits of the Dutch people are preserved by their descendants, giving a monotony to their life and manners, while their more mutable neighbors are yielding themselves, day by day, to the law of progress. This inveterate attachment to the old order of things, and aversion to innovations, peculiar to their nation, kept the ancient inhabitants of E—— in the same condition with their forefathers, notwithstanding the improvements introduced from European cities into other parts of the colony. Philadelphia, though at that time but a village in comparison to what it is now, was looked upon as a place of luxury and corruption dangerous to the morals of youth. Few of the families composing the settlement at E—— had ever been there, or had visited any other of the provincial cities. They sought no intercourse with the world's great Babel, content with the information that reached them regularly once a week with the newspapers brought by the post-boy, which were loaned to the neighbors in turn by the few who received them. Now and then, it is true, when the business of the day was over, a number of men might be seen seated in the large sitting-room of the old stone tavern, or on the veranda, wearing their low-crowned, broad-brimmed hats, smoking their pipes, and discussing events of which the rumor had reached them, when these were more stirring than common. But these discussions were always conducted quietly, and without the exhibition of any feeling of partisanship. They were terminated at a very early hour, all thought of political matters being usually dismissed with the last puff of their pipes, as the worthy mynheers took their way homewards.

As little did the love of change prevail among the good *fraus* of that day. They were of the class described by a distinguished chronicler, who "stayed at home, read the Bible, and wore frocks." They wore the same antiquated quilted caps and parti-colored homespun gowns, that were in fashion in the days of the renowned Wouter Van Twiller; their pockets were always filled with work and the implements of industry, and their own gowns and their husband's coats were exclusively of domestic manufacture. In cleanliness and thrifty housewifery, they were excelled by none who had gone before, or who came after them. The well-scoured stoops and entries, fresh and immaculate every morning, attested the neatness prevailing throughout the dwellings. The precise order that reigned within, in the departments of kitchen, parlor, and chamber, could not be disturbed by any out-of-door commotion. Cleanliness and contentment were the cares of the household. The tables were spread with the abundance of the good old time, and not small was the pride of those ministering dames in setting forth the viands prepared by their own industrious hands. It must not be supposed that all their care and frugality were inconsistent with the dear exercise of hospitality, or other social virtues usually practiced in every female community. If the visits paid from house to house were less frequent than in modern times, there was the same generous interest in the concerns of others, and the same desire in each to save her neighbor trouble by kindly taking the management of affairs upon herself, evinced by so many individuals of the present day. In short, the domestic police of E——, at that remote period, was apparently as remarkable for

vigilance and severity in hunting out offenders as it has proved to be in times of more advanced civilization.

The arrival of new residents from the city was an event of importance enough in itself to cause no small stir in that quiet community. The rumor that a small house, picturesquely situated at the edge of a wood some distance from the village, was being fitted up for the new-comers, was soon spread abroad, and gave rise to many conjectures and surmises. The new furniture that paraded in wagons before the astonished eyes of the settlers was different from any that had been seen before; and, though it would have been thought simple enough, or even rude, at the present day, exhibited too much of metropolitan taste and luxury to meet their approval. Then a gardener was employed several days to set in order the surrounding plot of ground, and set out rose bushes and ornamental plants; the fence was painted gayly, and the inclosure secured by a neat gate. A few days after, a light traveling wagon brought the tenants to the abode prepared for them. Within the memory of a generation, hardly any occurrence had taken place which excited so much curiosity. The doors and windows were crowded with gazers; and the younger part of the population were hardly restrained by parental authority from rushing after the equipage. The female, who sat with a boy on the back seat, wore a thick veil; but the pleasant face of a middle-aged man, who looked about him and bowed courteously to the different groups, attracted much attention. The man who drove had a jolly English face, betokening a very communicative disposition; nor was the promise broken to the hope; for that very evening the same personage was seated among a few grave-looking Dutchmen who lingered at the tavern, dealing out his information liberally to such as chose to question him. The new-comer, it appeared, was a member of the Colonial Assembly, and had brought his family to rusticate for a season on the banks of the Delaware. This family consisted of his English wife and a son about seven years old. They had been accustomed, he said, to the society of the rich and gay both in Philadelphia and in Europe, having spent some time in Paris before their coming to this country.

The information given by the loquacious driver, who seemed to think the village not a little honored in so distinguished an accession to its inhabitants, produced no favorable impression. The honest mynheers, however, were little inclined to be hasty in their judgment. They preferred consulting their wives, who waited with no little patience for the Sabbath morning, expecting then to have a full opportunity of criticizing their new neighbors.

They were doomed to disappointment; none of the family was at the place of meeting, although the practice of church-going was one so time-honored, that a journey of ten miles on foot to attend religious service was thought nothing of, and few even of the most worldly-minded ventured on an omission. The non-appearance of the strangers was a dark omen. The next day, however, the dames of the settlement had an opportunity of seeing Mrs. Winton—for so I shall call her, not choosing to give her real name—as she came out to purchase a few articles of kitchen furniture. Her style of dress was altogether different from theirs. Instead of the hair pomatumed back from the forehead, she wore it in natural ringlets; instead of the short stuff petticoats in vogue among the Dutch dames, a long and flowing skirt set off to advantage a figure of remarkable grace. At the first glance, one could not but acknowledge her singular beauty. Her form was faultless in symmetry, and her features exquisitely regular; the complexion being of a clear brown, set off by luxuriant black hair, and a pair of brilliant dark eyes. The expression of these was not devoid of a certain fascination, though it had something to excite distrust in the simple-minded fair ones who measured the claims of the stranger to admiration. They could not help thinking there was a want of innate modesty in the bold, restless wanderings of those eyes, bright as they were, and in the perfect self-possession the English woman showed in her somewhat haughty carriage. Her voice, too, though melodious, was not low in its tones, and her laugh was merry and frequently heard. In short, she appeared, to the untutored judgment of the dames of the village, decidedly wanting in reserve, and the softness natural to youth in woman. While they shook their heads, and were shy of conversation with her, it was not a little wonderful to notice the different effect produced on their spouses. The honest Dutchmen surveyed the handsome stranger with undisguised admiration, evinced at first by a prolonged stare, and on after occasions by such rough courtesy as they found opportunity of showing, with alacrity offering to her any little service that neighbors might render. The women, on the other hand, became more and more suspicious of her outlandish gear and her bewitching smiles, lavished with such profusion upon all who came near her. Her charms, in their eyes, were so many sins, which they were inclined to see her expiate before they relented so far as to extend towards her the civilities of neighborhood. The more their husbands praised her, the more they stood aloof; and, for weeks after the family had become settled, scarcely any communication of a friendly nature had taken place between her and any of the female population.

Little, however, did the Englishwoman appear to care for neglect on the part of those she evidently thought much inferior to herself. She had plenty of company, such as suited her taste, and no lack of agreeable employment, notwithstanding her persistence in a habit which shocked still more the prejudices of her worthy neighbors—of leaving her household labor to a servant. She made acquaintance with all who relished her lively conversation, and took much pleasure in exciting, by her eccentric manners, the astonishment of her long-queued

admirers. She was always affable, and not only invited those she liked to visit her without ceremony, but called upon them for any extra service she required.

It was on one of the brightest days in October that Mrs. Winton was riding with her son along a path leading through the forest up the Delaware. The road wound at the base of a mountain, bordering the river closely, and was flanked in some places by precipitous rocks, overgrown with shrubs and shaded by overhanging trees. The wealth of foliage appeared to greater advantage, touched with the rich tints of autumn—

"With hues more gay
Than when the flow'rets bloomed, the trees are drest;
How gorgeous are their draperies! green and gold,
Scarlet and crimson! like the glittering vest
Of Israel's priesthood, glorious to behold!

"See yonder towering hill, with forests clad,
How bright its mantle of a thousand dyes!
Edged with a silver band, the stream, that glad,
But silent, winds around its base."

It can hardly be known if the romantic beauty of the scene, which presented itself by glimpses through the foliage, the bright calm river, the wooded hills and slopes beyond, and the village lying in the lap of the savage forest, called forth as much admiration from those who gazed, as it has since from spirits attuned to a vivid sense of the loveliness of nature. The sudden flight of a bird from the bushes startled the horse, and, dashing quickly o one side, he stood on the sheer edge of the precipice overlooking the water. The next plunge might have been a fatal one, but that the bridle was instantly seized by the strong arm of a man who sprang from the concealment of the trees. Checking the frightened animal, he assisted the dame and her son to dismount, and then led the horse for them to less dangerous ground. In the friendly conversation that followed, the Englishwoman put forth all her powers of pleasing; for the man was known already to her for one of the most respectable of the settlers, though he had never yet sought her society. His little service was rewarded by a cordial invitation, which was soon followed by a visit, to her house.

To make a long story short, not many weeks had passed before this neighbor was an almost daily visitor; and, to the surprise and concern of the whole village, his example was in time followed by many others of those who might have been called the gentry of E——. It became evident that the handsome stranger was a coquette of the most unscrupulous sort; that she was passionately fond of the admiration of the other sex, and was determined to exact the tribute due her charms even from the sons of the wilderness. She flirted desperately with one after another, contriving to impress each with the belief that he was the happy individual especially favored by her smiles. Her manners and conversation showed less and less regard for the opinion of others, or the rules of propriety. The effect of such a course of conduct in a community so simple and old-fashioned in their customs, so utterly unused to any such broad defiance of censure, may be more easily imagined than described. How the men were flattered and intoxicated in their admiration for the beautiful siren, and their lessons in an art so new to them as gallantry, how the women were amazed out of their propriety, can be conceived without the aid of philosophy.

Things were bad enough as they were; but when the time came for Mr. Winton to depart and take his place in the Assembly, the change was for the worse. His handsome wife was left, with only her son, in E—— for the winter. Her behavior was now more scandalous than ever, and soon a total avoidance of her by every other female in the place attested their indignation. The coquette evidently held them in great scorn, while she continued to receive, in a still more marked and offensive manner, the attentions of the husbands, whom, she boasted, she had taught they had hearts under their linsey-woolsey coats. Long walks and rides through the woods, attended always by some *one* who had owned the power of her beauty, set public opinion wholly at defiance; and the company at her fireside, evening after evening, was well known to be not such as became a wife and mother to receive.

Should this history of plain, unvarnished fact chance to meet the eye of any fair trifler, who has been tempted to invite or welcome such homage, let her pause and remember that the wrath of the injured wives of E—— was but such as nature must rouse in the bosom of the virtuous in all ages and countries; and that tragedies as deep as that to which it led have grown from the like cause, and may still do so at any period of civilization.

The winter months passed, and spring came to set loose the streams, and fill the woods with tender bloom and verdure. But the anger of the justly irritated dames of E—— had gathered strength with time. Scarce one among the most conspicuous of the neighborhood but had particular reason to hate their common enemy for the alienated affections and monopolized time of her husband, so faithful to his duties before this fatal enchantment. Complaints were made by one to another, and strange stories told, which, of course, lost nothing in their circulation from mouth to mouth. What wonder was it that the mysterious influence exercised by the strange woman should be attributed to witchcraft? What wonder that she should be judged to hold intercourse with evil spirits, and to receive from them the power by which she subdued men to her sway?

Late in the afternoon of a beautiful day in the early part of June, two or three of the matrons of the village stationed themselves near the wood by which stood the house of Mrs. Winton. Not far from this was a small pond, where the boys amused themselves in fishing, or bathed during the heats of summer. The spot once occupied by this little body

of water is now the central portion of the town, and covered with neat buildings of brick and stone.

The women had come forth to watch; nor was their vigilance long unrewarded. They saw Mrs. Winton, accompanied by one of her gallants, dressed with a care that showed his anxiety to please, walking slowly along the borders of the wood. The sun had set, and the gray shadows of twilight were creeping over the landscape; yet it was evidently not her intention to return home. As it grew darker, the two entered the wood, the female taking the arm of her companion, and presently both disappeared.

"There he goes!" exclaimed one of the women who watched, with fierce anger in her looks, for it was her husband she had seen. "I knew it; I knew he spent every evening with her!"

"Shall we follow them?" asked the other.

"No! no! let us go home quick!" was the answer.

Such a scene as the night witnessed was never before enacted in that quiet village. At a late hour there was a meeting of many of the matrons in the house of one of their number. The curtains were closely drawn; the light was so dim that the faces of those who whispered together could scarcely be discerned. There was something fearful in the assemblage, at such an unwonted time, of those orderly housewives, so unaccustomed ever to leave their homes after dusk. The circumstance of their meeting alone betokened something uncommon in agitation. Still more did the silence, hushed and breathless at intervals, the eager, but suppressed whispering, the rapid gestures, the general air of determination mingled with caution. It struck midnight; they made signs one to another, and the light was extinguished.

It was perhaps an hour or more after, when the same band of women left the house, and took their way, in profound silence, along the road leading out of the village. By a roundabout course, skirting the small body of water above mentioned, they came to the border of the wood. Just then the waning moon rose above the forest tops, shedding a faint light over hill and stream. It could then be seen that the females all wore a kind of mask of black stuff. Their course was directed towards the Englishwoman's house, which they approached with stealthy and noiseless steps.

A few moments of silence passed, after they had disappeared, and then a wild shriek was heard, and others fainter and fainter, like the voice of one in agony struggling to cry out, and stifled by powerful hands. The women rushed from the wood, dragging with them their helpless victim, whom they had gagged so that she could not even supplicate their mercy. Another cry was presently heard—the wail of a terrified child. The little boy, roused from sleep by the screams of his mother, ran towards her captors, and throwing himself on his knees, begged for her in piteous accents and with streaming tears.

"Take him away!" cried several together; and one of their number, snatching up the child, ran off with him at her utmost speed, and did not return.

The others proceeded quickly to their mission of vengeance. Dragging the helpless dame to the pond, they rushed into it, heedless of risk to themselves, till they stood in deep water. Then each, in turn, seizing her enemy by the shoulders, plunged her in, head and all, crying, as she did so, "This is for my husband!" "And this for mine!" "This for mine!" was echoed, with the plunges, in quick succession, till the work of retribution was accomplished, and the party hurried to shore.

Startled by a noise as of some one approaching, the disguised avengers fled, leaving their victim on the bank, and lost no time in hastening homeward. The dawn of day disclosed a dreadful catastrophe: Dame Winton was found dead beside the water. There was evidence enough that she had perished, not by accident, but violence. Who could have done the deed?

The occurrence caused great commotion in E——, as it was but natural it should; but it was never discovered with certainty who were the perpetrators of the murder. Suspicion fell on several; but they were prudent enough to keep silence, and nothing could be proved against them. Perhaps the more prominent among the men, who should have taken upon themselves the investigation of the affair, had their own reasons for passing it over rather slightly. It was beyond doubt, too, that actual murder had not been designed by the actors in the tragedy; but simply the punishment assigned to witchcraft by popular usage. So the matter was not long agitated, though it was for many years a subject of conversation among those who had no interest in hushing it up; and the story served as a warning to give point to the lessons of careful mothers.

It was for a long time believed that the ghost of the unfortunate Englishwoman haunted the spot where she had died. Nor did the belief cease to prevail long after the pond was drained, and the wood felled, and the space built over. A stable belonging to a gentleman with whom I am acquainted stands near the place. I have heard him relate how one of his servants, who had never heard the story had rushed in one night, much alarmed, to say that he had seen a female figure, in old-fashioned cap and white gown, standing at the door of the stable. Another friend, who resides near, was told by his domestic that a strange woman had stood at the back gate, who had suddenly disappeared when asked who she was. Thus there seems ground enough to excuse the belief, even now prevalent among the common people in E——, that the spirit still walks at night about that portion of the town.

and then, if you have courage, all the essentials are yours. You are to preserve a firm, upright seat in the saddle, neither leaning backwards nor stooping forwards; the latter destroys all the grace of many otherwise good riders; and remember, above all, that gentleness is as much appreciated by horses as by any other creature you may chance to guide, and that they often yield to it when brute force enrages.

As to dress, it matters not how plain the material, so the skirt is ample and the corsage easy; and we would recommend, from present experience, a broad straw hat, or flat, as it is called, as a protection for the head and face. No custom is more simple or graceful, and a plea of expense need not be urged against the rational pleasure and improvement, both to body and mind, of frequent equestrian excursions.

CONFESSIONS OF A DREAMER

BY MRS. E. OAKES SMITH.

PART I.

"The things that day most minds by night do most appear."—SPENSER.

"I really am ashamed of the poverty of my dreams." CHARLES LAMB.

———"Which gives me hope
That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream,
Waking thou never wilt consent to do."—MILTON.

"Nay, oft in *dreams* invention we bestow,
To change a flounce or add a furbelow."—POPE.

"Behold, this dreamer cometh!"—*Bible*

WE were telling a dream, and looked into the face of our listener with that obstinate kind of idiosyncrasy that belongs to dreamers, but which it would be difficult to explain—we, an obstinate psychologist, believing in all spiritualisms, because the ood Father has made this part of our nature so rgent and unmistakable, that it is more difficult to oubt the realities of the internal than the external ie. We looked into his face—

"I never dream, madam."

"Never dream! Then I am afraid you have no ul."

"No soul! Madam, do you believe in the Bible? are you only talking poetry?"

"Only talking poetry!—*only!* I am talking of ts—of the most undeniable testimony to soulstence which dreaming affords. Suppose it *is* try. Is not poetry truth?—the deep, sudden th felt at the bottom of every soul?—truth that i lift up its voice and cry aloud in every human rt till the world stifles its utterance?"

Oh dear, madam, I do not comprehend a word say; and yet I dare be bound it is very good."

o more did he. How could he, who never amed, understand poetry? And what right had attempt indoctrinating him with the spirit of ry, and disturbing his smooth dullness and exnt digestion with a malicious and energetic ch out of the common track?

d the pre-Adamite men and women sleep? they dream? I think not. To dream well, one be alone: there is a neutralizing of the divine ice where another head is busied with its angel he same pillow. Adam, alone in Paradise, slept, and Eve was *his* dream. Milton says that Eve slept, and the serpent was *hers*, "squat like a toad" close to her ear. Alas! for the sad change from the solitary dreamer of Eden, when Eve was conceived, and the wild waste of earth, with its wearisome companionships, and the tree of knowledge guarded with the serpent stings of unsatisfied yearnings!

The spirit needs no sleep; what death is to the body sleep would be to the soul. It finds its Sabbath, which is rest, when it reposes upon some great and beautiful thought; when it has reached some companionship nearest its higher elements; when it finds itself in some atmosphere akin to its nature, and it breathes and glows in loveliness, like the blossom of the field, too ineffably content even to need a voice. We may imagine the spiritual being laying down its material companion tenderly to slumber, withdrawing itself gently from the exhausted receptacle, and rejoicing in its freedom from the frettings of daily life; while itself, needless of repose, goes out into new and untried spheres, filling its urn at divine fountains, lighting the torch of its existence in the glories of the Infinite Source; holding its companionship with undying affinities, and enlarging itself by ranging through illimitable space.

Once, during a period of suffering, I must have remained soul-conscious from the moment of sleeping. I was then, as I often am, aware of the process of sleep, its coming on, and the fading away of consciousness. Ideas commingled, and I felt a sensation of pain in the region of the heart; a sense of dread, as it were, pervading the nerves, as if they shrank from a power which they could not resist. I think this state is not unlike death. It is always so distinctly defined, I am almost lost; then rouse myself, as if in opposition to some state which appals me, and then am gone. Death's twin brother has the ascendant. At the time of which I am speaking, I thought I raised my body up gently and laid it in a grave that seemed ready for it; I smoothed the turf down orderly with a vague feeling that blossoms would grow therefrom, and then stood, the only mourner over my poor self, weeping bitterly. The impression was so vivid that I awoke before my soul could start upon its journey.

AUNT TABITHA'S FIRESIDE.

No. I.—THE HAUNCH OF VENISON.

BY EDITH WOODLEY.

"Don't believe in witches? Why, Lizzie Parker, how you do talk!" said Aunt Tabitha Tremlin, dropping her knitting-work into her lap, and holding up both hands with astonishment.

"I cannot say that I do," replied Lizzie.

"Well, your cousin ain't sich a wicked sinner as not to believe in 'em, I know—are you, Paul?"

Paul, who sat in front of the fire, idly stirring a large bed of glowing rock-maple coals, threw a merry glance out of the corner of his left eye towards Lizzie, as much as to say, "Now for a little sport;" then, quickly assuming a look of profound gravity, he replied—

"I hardly know what to say, Aunt Tabitha; but one thing is certain, strange things have happened in this world of ours."

"That 's what there has. Lizzie can't gainsay that. But I want to have you tell me, Paul, if any of 'em ever happened in your own *spear* of observation."

"Why, there was a little affair took place, that seemed some like witchwork, during one of our college vacations, which I spent in New York."

"I 'll warrant it," said Aunt Tabitha. "Tell us all about it, Paul." And, clasping her hands tightly together, she commenced a rocking motion, such as is sometimes adopted by persons who have a taste for intensifying their feelings to what might, to borrow a phrase applied to metallic substances, be termed a white heat.

"You never heard of Mr. Pragg, I suppose?" said Paul.

"Haven't I though? I used to know old Pete Pragg as well as I know you."

"Mr. Ebenezer Pragg is the one I mean."

"La! well, if I never seed Nezer, I 've heern tell of him. He 's a kin to old Pete: his father and Pete were second cousins. Well, what of him? Has Nezer anything to do with your story?"

"You shall hear," said Paul, solemnly. "Mr. Ebenezer Pragg, who is a resident of the city of New York, belongs to a club. The number is limited to six; and no one is admitted except he is a bachelor. Though every evening plenty of refreshments are placed upon the sideboard, they have what they call a regular supper only once a week, which is prepared in the basement of the same building containing the club-room. One day a man by the name of Bluff, who was a member of the club, told me that they were going to have a venison supper that evening, and invited me to attend. 'It was a fine haunch of venison, so Mr. Pragg told him,' he said, 'who had received it from a friend in the country as a present.' I accepted the invitation; and, when we arrived, we found all the other members assembled. As I shall have occasion to allude to each of them hereafter, I will mention that the names of the four members besides Mr Bluff and Mr. Pragg, were Questman, Nixon, Stilts, and Sippet. Not long after we arrived, a lad came into

the room and whispered to Mr. Pragg, who immediately withdrew. He was absent about ten minutes; and, when he returned, he looked white as a sheet."

"The land o' massy, Paul, how you skeer me!" said Aunt Tabitha.

"'Gentlemen,' said he. He could go no farther; but stopped, and gasped for breath.

"I never!" exclaimed Aunt Tabitha, rocking herself backwards and forwards more vehemently than ever. "Go on with your story, Paul."

"'Gentlemen,' resumed Mr. Pragg, 'I have seen such a strange sight!' and again he stopped and gasped for breath. Here Mr. Stilts, who was the junior member of the club, and prided himself on his talent for recitation, having already put himself into attitude, waiting with open mouth the first moment of silence, began—

"'"I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up your soul, freeze"'——

"'What has happened, Mr. Pragg? What have you seen?' said Mr. Questman, breaking in upon Mr. Stilts.

"'We are all curiosity,' said Mr. Nixon.

"'Freeze'—said Mr. Stilts, catching up the thread of his recitation where Mr. Questman broke it off.

"'It must have been really awful,' said Mr. Nixon, 'or Mr. Pragg would never have turned so pale.'

"'It makes me tremble to think of it,' said Mr. Sippet.

"'Free—eeze'—again chimed in Mr. Stilts.

"'Permit me, Mr. Stilts,' said Mr. Pragg, waving his hand with great dignity. 'I think I can tell it now.'

"'Certainly, certainly; I perceive—I see that "Richard 's himself again!"' Whereupon Mr. Stilts, who looked as if, by means of some invisible machinery, he was screwed and contorted in a manner very painful to endure, resumed a natural attitude.

"'Can you tell it now? If not, take longer time to compose yourself,' said Mr. Nixon.

"'Yes, I am composed now; perfectly so,' said Mr. Pragg. 'You know, gentlemen, that we expected to have a nice haunch of venison for supper?'

"'I, for one, knew it,' said Mr. Bluff.

"'And so did I,' said Mr. Stilts; 'for, as you may remember, Mr. Pragg, I was present when it arrived.'

"'You were, Mr. Stilts; and do I exaggerate when I say it was nice—exceedingly so?'

"'Not a jot, not a jot. I can certify that—

'"The haunch was a picture for a painter to study,
The fat was so white, the lean was so ruddy!"'

"'That is what it was,' said Mr. Pragg. 'But it has turned out to be a leg of mutton!'

"'And blue and hard as a whetstone!' said Peter, the lad who had called Mr. Pragg from the room, that he might witness the remarkable transformation it had undergone.

"'Peter, you must have made some mistake,' said Mr. Bluff. 'I have no belief that a haunch of venison could turn into a leg of mutton.'

"'No, I haven't, certingly,' said Peter. 'Miss Mullet, Mr. Pragg's housekeeper, told me 'twas the wenson; and I seed it, too, afore she did it up in the cloth, and it didn't look a bit as it did when the cook took the cloth off.'

"'Come, let us go and see what it looks like now,' said Mr. Bluff.

"'That 's what I say,' said Mr. Questman. 'Come, Sippet, come along.'

"'Gentlemen,' said Mr. Pragg, 'it is my wish that you *all* go, and thus satisfy yourselves that the astonishment—I might say, alarm—which you saw depicted on my countenance was not without a cause.'

"In consequence of this request, we all proceeded to the cook's sanctum, where we beheld, as had been reported, a little blue, miserable-looking leg of mutton.'

"'It is my opinion,' said Mr. Sippet, in a hoarse whisper, 'that it is bewitched.'

"'You are bewitched twice as much,' said Mr. Bluff.

"'I am inclined to think that Sippet is right,' said Mr. Questman.

"'The truth is, Mr. Questman,' said Sippet, putting his lips close to that gentleman's ear, 'that Mrs. Mullet, who, you know, keeps Mr Pragg's house, is—at least, I 've no doubt of it—what the Scotch people would call a little uncanny.'

"'Is it possible? What makes you think so?'

"'What has now taken place would be enough; but I have other reasons.'

"'You think, then, that Mrs. Mullet'—and, glancing his eye towards the mutton, Mr. Questman eked out his sentence by winks and nods.

"'Just so,' replied Mr. Sippet.

"Mr. Pragg did not speak, but kept his eyes fixed on the mutton, as if it possessed the power of fascination.

"'See how our partner 's rapt!' said Mr. Stilts And then giving a sudden jerk at Mr. Pragg's sleeve, he added—

'"Why stands Macbeth thus amazedly?"'

"This had the effect to rouse Mr. Pragg, who stamping on the floor to give emphasis to his words said—

"'Gentlemen, I will sift this matter to the bottom!—I will confront Mrs. Mullet!—I will compel her to account for this transformation! Peter, take this leg of mutton and carry it back to Mrs. Mullet. I shall soon be there myself. Gentlemen, will not some of you go with me?'

"'It is my mind that we all go,' said Mr. Nixon.

"Peter took the mutton"—

"Well, I wouldn't 'ave touched it sooner than I would a live sarpent," said Aunt Tabitha. "Go on with your story, Paul."

"Peter took the mutton, in order to carry it back to Mrs. Mullet; and, in about five minutes, we were all ready to follow him. When arrived at Mr. Pragg's residence, according to his directions, we, in silence, stole round to the back of the house, where, through the uncurtained windows, we could see Mrs. Mullet, who sat before the kitchen fire knitting. Peter had not yet arrived.

"'Do you see that great kettle steaming over the fire?' whispered Mr. Sippet.

> "'Double, double, toil and trouble,
> Fire burn and caldron bubble,'

whispered Mr. Stilts in reply."

"You 'd seen an awful sight, if you could 'ave seen into that calderon, I 'll warrant you," said Aunt Tabitha.

"'It is my opinion,' said Mr. Sippet, 'that she and some of her cronies are going to have a good set-down, and that she is cooking their supper in that caldron.'

"'I shouldn't wonder if she was,' said Mr. Nixon.

> "'Fillet of a fenny snake,
> In the caldron boil and bake,'

whispered Mr. Stilts.

"'I can't think where Peter is,' said Mr. Pragg.

"'I shouldn't think strange,' said Mr. Sippet, 'if he has had a witch-bridle slipped over his head by this time.'

"'You had better look out, Sippet,' said Mr. Bluff, 'or you may have one slipped over yours. It 's my opinion that you would make a spirited little nag; and the witches, I 'll venture to say, won't think of walking home after feasting on the contents of the caldron.'

"'They 'll have a merry time of it, I dare say,' said Mr. Stilts; and he commenced repeating—

> "'Now about the caldron sing,
> Like elves and fairies in a ring,
> Enchanting all that you put in.
> Black spirits and white,
> Red spirits and gray;
> Mingle, mingle, mingle,
> You that mingle may.'

"'Peter is coming, I guess,' said Mr. Pragg, so- nnly, who, with Mr. Nixon, had been peeping und the corner of the house.

"'What are you about, Sippet?' said Mr. Quest- n, as, by the dim light which gleamed from the ndows, he perceived him seated on the ground, led up somewhat in the form of a ball.

"'Turning one of my stockings wrong side out- rds,' was the reply; 'and I advise you to do the e. Certain kinds of persons—such as, you know —can have no power over those who have on article of apparel turned wrong side outwards.'

"'I 've a good mind to turn one of mine,' said Mr. Questman.

"'It appears to me,' said Mr. Nixon, who now approached, and was let into the secret of turning the stocking, 'that turning the coat would be a much better protection. Not that I 'm afraid; but it can do no harm to take proper precaution.' And, taking off his coat, he turned it.

"Mr. Questman's mind was now thrown into a most painful state of dubiosity as to whether it would be better to turn his stocking or his coat. While he was still halting between two opinions, Peter arrived; and, in answer to Mr. Pragg's some what noisy summons, Mrs. Mullet had opened the door. There was no longer any time for hesitation, and little for execution. It was a moment of anxious, almost overwhelming, solicitude, when a bright thought, like a gleam of sunshine cast upon dark and troubled waters, came to his relief. He had a flannel night-cap in his pocket, and quickly taking it thence, he turned it and put it on his head, thinking, as he did so, that, if there was any spot more vulnerable than another to the weird glances or invisible weapons to which he imagined he was about to be exposed, it was more likely to be on his head than his heel. A most logical deduction, rising not only from the fact of never having, like the renowned Achilles, been dipped into the River Styx, but from a consciousness that he did not, in any other respect, bear the most remote resemblance to that redoubtable warrior of the olden time.

"Nearly crushed with the weight of the honor thus unexpectedly thrust upon her, of having so many gentlemen enter the kitchen, Mrs. Mullet hastened to place chairs for their accommodation round the fire. No one, however, except myself seemed disposed to take advantage of this hospitable movement; and, though an eye was now and then directed stealthily askant towards the boiling five-pail kettle, each tongue was chained in solemn silence. Mr. Pragg was the first to break it.

"'Peter,' said he, 'place the mutton upon the table.'

"'Don't you think that the blaze of the candle looks uncommonly blue?' said Mr. Sippet, in an under tone.

"This gave Mr. Stilts the cue, who, in a low, deep voice, as if horror-struck, exclaimed—

> "'The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight'—

"'Oh no, sir, it is not,' said Mrs. Mullet. 'The clock has just struck ten.'

"Peter, in the mean time, had laid the mutton on the table, as Mr. Pragg had directed him.

"'Go to that knife-basket, Peter,' said Mr. Pragg, who had placed himself, with an air of solemn dignity, near the table, 'and see if you can find me a silver fork.'

"'That 's a bright thought,' said Mr. Sippet. 'It is said there is great virtue in silver, in cases like the present. You have all of you, no doubt, heard of the execution a silver bullet has done,

when a company of the sisterhood has been heard riding through the air on broomsticks.' "

"I guess *I 've* heard the vartue there is in silver, if they never did," said Aunt Tabitha. "Why, when I 've been churning, 'specially arter it got to be putty late in the fall, I 've been obleeged forty times, and forty to the eend of that, to put a piece of silver money in the churn afore I could get a speck of butter. Paul, go on with your story."

"As Mr. Pragg raised the cloth upon the tines of the silver fork, he said—

" 'Mrs. Mullet, step this way.'

"Tremblingly, she approached the table."

"It 's no wonder she trembled," said Aunt Tabitha.

" 'It is my wish,' said Mr. Pragg, fixing his eyes on the countenance of little Mrs. Mullet, 'that you will account for this transformation.'

" 'What transformation?' Mrs. Mullet ventured to ask.

" 'I am not to be questioned: see for yourself,' said Mr. Pragg, continuing to look her steadily in the face.

"By this time Mr. Bluff, armed with his own natural courage, Mr. Stilts, who thought too much of his poetical quotations to think of much else, and Mr. Nixon, shielded by his turned coat, had boldly taken their stations on the opposite side of the table; while Mr. Questman peeped over Mr. Bluff's shoulder, and Mr. Sippet under Mr. Stilts' arm. As for Peter and myself, we took advantage of a place convenient both for seeing and hearing.

" 'Why, how is this?' said Mr. Bluff. 'This appears to me to be as good a haunch of venison as I ever laid my eyes on.'

" 'It appears the same to me now,' said Mr. Nixon, glancing his eyes over the armor of proof in which he was invested, in the shape of the turned coat.

" 'And so it does to me,' said Mr. Questman, putting his hand to his head to assure himself that it was well covered with the protecting night-cap.

" 'And so it does to me,' said Mr. Sippet, planting the foot covered with the turned stocking more firmly on the floor.

" 'So also it does to me,' said Mr. Pragg; 'but, gentlemen, I saw, and you saw, and we all saw, that, though it is a haunch of venison here, it was a leg of mutton in the kitchen of the club-house.'

" 'Yes,' said Mr. Nixon, 'though venison here, it was mutton there.'

" 'It has undergone singular changes, truly,' said Mr. Stilts; 'yet it was no great feat to perform for one who has

" '——lernit frae the fairy folk,
And frae her master true,
The words that can bear her through the air,
And locks and bars undo.'

" 'I am a poor ignorant woman, and can't understand what you mean,' said Mrs. Mullet, beginning to have a strange fear creep over her, as she listened to the wild lines repeated by Mr. Stilts, and observed the grotesque appearance of Mr. Nixon with his turned coat, the sleeves of which were lined with yellow satin; and of Mr. Questman, with his long sharp face, rendered particularly cadaverous by being surrounded by his flannel night-cap.

" 'Come,' said Mr. Bluff, 'time is wasting, and I think we had better go back to the club-room. Peter, take the venison and return with it—that is, with your leave, Mr. Pragg; for I can see no reason that we should be disappointed of our supper.'

" 'I couldn't taste a mouthful of it,' said Mr. Questman.

" 'Nor I,' said Mr. Sippet; 'my appetite is all gone.'

" 'So is mine,' said Mr. Nixon. 'If it wan't for that, I would show you I ain't afraid to eat it—I would.'

" 'Mr. Bluff,' said Mr. Pragg, 'if you think you can relish the venison, let Peter take it to your house.'

" 'Much obliged to you,' replied Mr. Bluff. 'My sister also will owe you her thanks, for I shall stay at home to-morrow evening, and assist her and my friend here, Mr. Parker, and one or two others, to eat it. Mrs. Mullet, I see, looks pale and fatigued, and I think we had better go.'

"This proposal was acceded to, without a single dissenting voice. Mr. Pragg, in a confidential whisper to his brothers of the club, assured them that he should never lodge under his own roof another night till Mrs. Mullet was gone. Mr. Stilts threw a sidelong glance towards her, repeating, as he left the room—

" 'The spell may crack, and the bridle break,
Then sharp your weird will be.'

"Mr. Bluff lingered a little behind, that he might direct Peter where to carry the venison, and then courteously bid Mrs. Mullet 'good night,' an example which was followed by your humble servant."

"Well, Paul," said Aunt Tabitha, "I want to ask you one question, and that is, whether you went and helped eat the pison stuff."

"I did."

"You did? Well, I 'll say one thing, and that is, you were one of the most presumptionest critters that ever breathed the breath of life since the flood."

"Presumptuous or not, aunt, I made a most capital supper."

"Well, all I 've got to say is, that you 've reason to thank yer stars that it didn't make you ravin' distracted. You wouldn't a got me to swaller a morsel of it, any more than if it had been so much rats*bean*. Now, Lizzie, arter hearin' Paul's story, I hope you 'll give up that there are sich folks as witches in the world."

"I must confess, Aunt Tabitha, that I am as unbelieving as ever."

"Well, I declare, if that ain't paying Paul a compliment, and with a witness, too. If I was to say it, I should call it tantamount to telling him he lies."

"I suspect," said Lizzie, "that Peter, or some other person concerned in the affair, was fond of a practical joke—was it not so, Paul?"

"For Aunt Tabitha's sake, who would take so much comfort in believing that, by the aid of spells and enchantments, the venison was really turned into mutton, and then back again into venison, I am sorry to confess that you are right. The truth is that Mr. Pragg was almost daily in the habit of practising some petty piece of meanness towards a man who kept a cellar, where he frequently took what he called a luncheon, though he generally made it answer for his dinner. The man had been looking out for an opportunity to do him a shrewd turn. Peter, who, on his way to the club-house, called at the cellar to rest and have a little chat, told him what he had in his cloth, and for what it was designed. He had, when he entered, laid it upon a table, and the man, thinking that he should not have a better chance to effect his purpose, watched his opportunity, and succeeded, unperceived by Peter, in substituting the mutton for the venison. Filled with wonder at the marvelous transformation, which persons much older, and, as he believed, a great deal wiser than himself, imagined had taken place, Peter, on his way back to the residence of Mr. Pragg, could not resist the temptation of again calling at the cellar, to make known what had happened. It exceeded the man's most sanguine expectations, and, to more fully carry out the joke, he made a second exchange."

"I don't believe a word of it," said Aunt Tabitha; "it 's a likely story that he could change one for t'other, right afore the boy's face and eyes, and he not see what he was about! If the raal truth of the matter could be come at, I 'll warrant you that it would turn out the suller-keeper was in league with that Miss Mullet. It would take more suller-keepers than could stand from here over to the North Parish meetin'-us to make me believe sich a shaller contrived story as that."

"I should like to know, Paul, what became of Mrs. Mullet," said Lizzie.

"Mr. Bluff was so much pleased with her appearance, that he recommended her to his sister, with whom he boarded. Her health being delicate, she was in want of a trustworthy person to superintend the housekeeping."

"Well, if anybody ever heard the like of that!" said Aunt Tabitha. "For my part, I don't know what the world 's coming to. In old times, people had more sense than to uphold sich characters in their wickedness. If Miss Mullet had lived in them days, and sarved the pairson she kept house for sich a trick as she did Mr. Pragg, she wouldn't 'ave come off quite so easy, I guess—she would 'ave had her desarts, and I wish to my heart she could have 'em now."

"A wish in which I most heartily join," said Paul, with great gravity. "And now, Aunt Tabitha, with your leave, I will go and get a few of those nice walnuts, and some of your favorite apples."

"That 's right, Paul; and when you are about it, bring along a mug of that nice spruce beer, that 's a good soul."

THE "PICKING BEE."

REMINISCENCES OF OTHER DAYS; BEING ODDS AND ENDS FROM AN OLD PORTFOLIO.

A TRUE SKETCH.

BY MRS. ANNA F. LAW.

To those of my readers who have never breathed the atmosphere of western wilds, listened to the rude jargon of *real Down Easters*, or placed their dainty feet on aught save cultivated glebes, the uncouth heading of this sketch will prove an enigma, which must be unraveled ere I proceed.

To the uninitiated I would therefore say that, though the rapid march of improvement has rendered this cognomen, "Bee," almost obsolete *now*, yet, comparatively but a few years since, it was, in parts of our country, the fashionable title given to *tea*, or *scandal parties*, whichsoever name you most prefer. I myself am convinced that these self-same parties frequently embrace the compound qualities of both appellations; for, certainly, due justice is generally done both to the refreshing qualities of the beverage, and also to settling the affairs of *poor unfortunate neighbors*, who, with their eyes *wide open*, are, alas! blind to the proper government of their own households. I beg you will pardon this digression, dear reader mine: and now to my story.

In the interior of the State of New York, in the most uncultivated portion of that country situated on the borders of the Black River, dwelt, long years since, some of the members of a German family, who had been driven, by the ravages and persecutions of war, to seek a peaceful shelter in the wilds of America.

Unacquainted with the life upon which they were entering, and entire strangers in this new land, they were easily persuaded by pilgrim companions to join in their wanderings; and at last, tempted by the apparent richness of soil in this far region, and by the attractive inducements held out by land-dealers, this little roving band became the settlers of a tract of country, wild beyond description, and, at the time of which I write, almost uninhabited.

It was with sad hearts these wanderers from home

MISS JOB.

BY CAROLINE CHESEBRO'.

"It 's all one to me, it 's all one to me,
Whether I 'm a beggar, whether I 'm a king!
If I am a king, I can spend the money;
If I am a beggar, I can leave the money:
So it 's all one to me, all one to me,
Whether I 'm a beggar, whether I 'm a king!

"It 's all one to me, it 's all one to me,
Whether I am old or whether I am young!
If I am young, why I can go a dancing;
If I am old, why I can leave off dancing!
It 's all one to me, all one to me,
Whether I am old or whether I am young."

People cannot grow handsomer to all eternity! Alas! I know it! The fact is indisputable.

Seraphina had reached the climax. The blush of beauty was gone; the flower was in full bloom. There was no deeper expression that those locks could assume; the eyes could not become more than colorless, nor the nose more of a pug: no final touch of grace was to be added to that form—to the stiff, uncompromising, right-angle and triangle gait.

You would laugh at Miss Job? I will not suffer it. She was a philosopher, and I reverence the whole order.

It is a fine thing to be a philosopher, it certainly is; Seraphina had thus learned many of the noblest and hardest lessons. She was patient, and very humble; she had attained "undue difficulties," extraordinary peace of mind, which really is the best thing a mortal can attain. For consider, if one is to worry and fret through this mortal existence, then is it nothing less than a dreadful bore. The frame of mind evinced by that foolish woman who was "troubled about many things," is intolerable; and a dissatisfied, pining, ever-troubled, and troubling spirit, is an unmitigated nuisance!

Now listen, O perverse generation of gold-diggers! I will tell you further of a mortal who lived above the world.

She was a transcendentalist, then? The bare thought is enough to make one smile. Seraphina Job was of the earth, earthy: she lived on common food—I care not who knows it; she walked and talked like a Christian; she was none of your "high-flyers;" and if she *had* sounded the depths of all knowledge, she brought not up *that* trophy which the "lions" do so often,

"The sea-weed on a clam!"

In a little two-story frame building, which looked as though it might have been fashioned from some superfluous timbers gathered for the construction of the Ark of Noah, lived our heroine. Look within it. What a miserable state of things! Can you tell, reader, why good-natured people are forever imposed upon? The lodger up-stairs has sent her children to play for a little in Miss Job's room—it rains so fast they cannot go out of doors: *cannot*, however, seems to be the careful parent's suggestion rather than that of the children, if the wistful look of the little faces, as ever and anon they are pressed close against the window panes, is to be taken into account.

Around the table covered with their hostess' work they romp and rave, until it seems as though Babel had transferred itself *bodily*. And now one has fallen and hit his head (a "*lucky* hit," so to speak) against the table. Forthwith, with tears fountainous, and groans indescribable, the precious group make a simultaneous rush for mamma's quarters. And then Miss Job sits down to collect her thoughts, and find out where she is.

While this difficult thing is in process, let us look back and discover how Patience, and Meekness, and Resignation, came to write their names so boldly on that unhandsome face of hers. Let no one on the wide earth believe that she was a heartless, senseless woman. It was in the hard school of sorrow she had graduated—in the class of the bereaved that she took her prize! Miss Job had had her disappointment. Bitter and grievous it was, and for the time overwhelming. Here (in proof) is a letter written by her a great many years before the time of life when Seraphina is brought before you, to win your admiring regard.

"When we parted, Margaret, you remember I promised to write you from India on this day. I was to tell you of that great field of labor—was to have decided then whether *I ought* to say to you, 'Come over and help us.' Had I not, in constant prayer, in hearty endeavor to feel entire submission to the Divine will during the weary twelve months past, been in a measure successful, I would say now, 'Come over and help *me*;' for oh! my friend, it is a heavy wo, a dreadful chastisement the Heavenly Father has laid upon me. And at the first, when the news that Thomas was lost reached me, then I—oh! *how* I wished that you could be with me, for I was among strangers—was alone. I made no effort to bear the affliction, I bowed down in my woe, and gave way to sinful murmuring: I asked in my madness, '*Why* hast thou taken my hope, my friend, my only one, O God?'

"Thomas! he was called away before the ship he sailed in had reached its destination. Had I but gone with him, then at least should I have died with him. You know that he denied me this—he would

conquer some of the difficulties of the way first, that the path might be easier to my feet—he would prepare a home for me, and accustom himself to a life in that land before I should go thither!

"I have been long in submitting myself to God's decree. Oh, may you never learn how hard a thing it is to have crushed out from human nature *all* worldly hopes and loves such as mine were! But at last, dear friend, I feel that I am beginning to find peace. If it were not so, I could never have written this letter to you. Since *that day*, I have spoken but rarely, have written not at all on this subject; it is sacred to me. I am learning now how small is even my overpowering grief in comparison with that which another, one Infinitely good, endured for us. The cry 'Why hast thou forsaken me?' has been often on my lips; but at last I remember how He who uttered it suffered and endured sorrows of which no mortal can conceive; and therefore I dare not utter the words again.

"Yesterday was my birthday. I am twenty-two. It seems as though a century had elapsed since I parted with my mother, and went out to service to maintain her and myself. You know how shortly after that time she died; before the bright prospects which afterwards opened upon me had dawned. You have heard how it was that my eyes early turned towards the heathen lands—how it was early in my life impressed on my mind that my duty was to be performed there; that I, a Christian child, *ought* to go into that great field, and labor for the Master. You know how, when I made this hope and desire of my heart known, a way at once opened itself before me: how the good and the generous took me under their charge and educated me: how in those days I met him whose heart glowed with the same holy hope: how it was our intention to be all of earth to each other—to be the life-long consolation, and support, and joy to each other. You know of this. I told it all to you when we parted. May God preserve you from ever understanding the sorrow, the struggle, and the deep despair which have since been my portion! When I heard that I stood alone in this world, my first impulse was to go out alone to India. The weight of my indebtedness to others pressed heavily upon me: they had expended time and money in my education; I was *bound* to go: though the way which seemed once so beautiful, so easy, revealed itself now a lonely, dreary way, I would press on in it.

"I strove then to put down, to conquer my own feelings. I went about accustomed duties. I prayed incessantly; but my heart's supplications were poured forth more in frenzy than in faith. I was so weak, Margaret, to combat with a lion! Since that time I have been very ill; my life went nearly from me. I have recovered—but cannot go to India. They tell me that I could not survive the voyage; therefore will I labor here It is good to labor—it is great to be patient. Can I not thus, in a measure, repay those who have dealt so kindly with the doubly orphaned? There is a school recently established for the instruction of those in foreign lands; there I can instruct, and, at the same time, support myself by my needle. For the present, while I *can*, I will devote what little energy I have in aiding others to follow that plough from which my hand has fallen. I have already made the arrangements necessary. My life, my time, is all, all I have to offer. Would to God it were a worthier sacrifice!

"His love be with you."

For a few years Miss Job continued to labor in this occupation, self-imposed by her deep sense of obligation. But the strivings of her spirit. the constant depression, the unutterable weariness and heart-heaviness which attended these labors among strangers, were too much for her: she could not bear them. It was a trial beyond her strength of endurance which was thus put upon her: she could never become perfectly reconciled to her lot, while the cheerful, the young, the happy, were about her. preparing themselves for departure to those scenes, to that new home, on which all the hopes of her own heart were fixed.

She left the school then, and in retirement and meditation, in labor and in prayer, sought for "the peace of God." And it came: it fell upon her heart like the soft, refreshing dew, in the performance of lonely tasks, in mercy to the poor, in an ever-gushing fount of charity, in giving of her poverty, in loving much, in trusting much, in feeling much, in doing much: thus did that "peace" evidence itself. Thus passing through Gethsemane, she stood upon the mountain—her earthly nature crucified; and the love of the Father was with her there—looking upward, the wail of agony found no more utterance, but the voice of culmness which could say—"Thy will be done, my Saviour."

Now look again upon her—ah, we must needs be interrupted! If you have not, reader, caught that peculiar and indescribable expression of her countenance, it is not for me to promise that you ever WILL on any succeeding interview, not being possessed, unfortunately, of so much of the spirit of accommodation as the country people were after the recent eruption of Vesuvius; *they* promised the disappointed stranger who "came too late," that they would get up another scene on his special account! Obligingness is a moral impossibility in our case.

Our intruder is evidently not considered as such by Miss Job. He is a gentleman—her senior by a great many years—a well-dressed, stalwart, gray-haired old man. His name is Townsend, Jedediah Townsend, the respectable owner of a wholesale and retail all-sort-of clothing establishment, quite well off in the world, quite agreeable, quite—benevolent? Wait a little.

"Ahem—Miss Job, good morning."

"Good morning, I'm glad to see you, Mr. Townsend. Will you be seated?"

"Thank you—thank you. Quite a rainy spell of weather, Miss Job—a good deal of mud abroad."

"Yes; the roads must be very bad. It 's pleasant to work in the house such weather. I can always work faster in such weather; there 's nothing to divert one's eyes then. Black cloth is as pleasant to look on as black clouds."

"Exactly so; true to the letter. You are fond of the needle, Miss Job?"

"Yes; it is my true friend—it brings me all manner of comfortable things, and helps me to help others; a trusty servant is my needle."

"Don't you ever tire out?—don't you ever get lonely, living here by yourself so?"

"Never—I can say it truly. I walk when I am tired of sitting within doors; if it is cold and stormy out of doors, then I read: that rests me too. I never am lonely."

"I wonder what 's the reason seamstresses complain so much, and why, every once in a while, folks get up such a 'hurrah, boys!' talking about their wrongs, and so forth?"

"Ah, that 's about the poor young things who are a thousand times worse off than I. *I* am rich to them, Mr. Townsend! Poor things! the Lord have mercy upon them! When you have dealings with any of those pale, tired-looking, worn-out young creatures, who appear as though they were standing at death's door, deal kindly by them—they are human, and very unfortunate."

"You 've a kind heart, Miss Job; do you take pity on everybody?"

"I always try to bear in mind that we are sinful, very sinful beings; that the differences in people come by accident, for, as the great man—what 's his name?—said, 'We are all the accidents of an accident.' We are very apt to be too harsh in our judgments, and too—too cold-hearted."

"What is it, Miss Job, that you mean by charity? It 's important I should know the definition you give the word, ma'am."

The woman thus appealed to paused a moment before she replied, as though in wonderment as to the necessity of the case (perhaps she was thinking a proper answer); then she said, fixing those two colorless eyes clearly and steadfastly upon him—

"If a person in great want came to your door, and you gave him something you needed, which could not well be spared, but which you *could* do without at a pinch, I should say you had done a charitable thing. If you would not believe your neighbor guilty of a crime he stood accused of, till it was proved beyond doubting, I should say you had acted charitably; and if you gave yourself up, and all you had, to serve another who needed your service, who deserved it, I should think you had fully interpreted the word—that you had *proved* charity to be greatest of all things."

"It is just to the point—are *you* so charitable? I am alone in my old age, Miss Job! It 's lonely over in my house—you *must* be lonely here. I know you are. I want some one to live with me besides the rats—will *you?*"

She looked up at him in wonder, and seeing that the old man was really in earnest, said, kindly and meekly—

"I cannot—I do not wish to marry."

"You are getting along in years as well as I. Dear madam, who is going to take care of you when your eyes fail, and you are too old to work?"

"I feel that I shall not live to be very old. If I serve God faithfully in my life, He will care for me."

"Oh, but it 's poor charity you have," said the old man, wiping his eyes. His voice failed him for a moment; recovering himself, he continued—"Miss Job, it 's nearly thirty-six years since my wife died; I never have loved any woman since—never have asked any to marry me. My Joseph was a comfort to me—he was my comfort, my stay—the house was full and merry when he was in it. Now you know that he is dead and gone—I shall not see him any more. Sometimes I think I will put an end to my life at once, it 's so desperate lonely. Madam, I do not swear I love you, and throw myself on my knees to take the oath. You 've got too much sense to want me to make a fool of myself; but I 'll promise you that I 'll be a good husband—I can 't hold on many years longer—you shall not have to work after I am gone!"

Alas! for that cherished dream of single blessedness, kept "in memory of the dead!" Alas, for that sweet dream of being laid quietly to rest, after sailing peacefully and alone along the shores of Time! Philosophy and charity conspired to demolish all such visions. Seraphina could not resist their attack, united with the tears the lonely old gentleman came to weep every day in her humble little parlor: in due time she was vanquished entirely. She gave her word she would become the wife of Mr. Townsend, his housekeeper, waiting-maid, nurse.

So, in compliance with that promise, stood she, one day, leaning on the arm of that respectable personage, past middle age; and Miss Job took all the vows upon *herself*, feeling in duty bound; and faithfully and rigidly she kept them.

Oh, heavens! yes—but do you know all that such a union as she made signifies? Bear in mind, the bride was no gay, young creature—a honeysuckle wedded to an old oak. Then had the bees come humming round her, with their soft, musical voices, gossipping away the bright summer days. She was no giddy girl, who, in the lightness of her heart, could fling off the load of oppressive thought at any moment; her life was no April day, whose smiles and whose tears are alike irresistible. *Such* unions have been that proved peaceable—nay, happy. But could you know the slave that Seraphina Job was for ten long years to that old heathen! When, at the end of that time, she was once more free, a widow, she might have told a horrider story than any galley slave or Siberian exile could conjure up.

"Gray hairs are honorable," I know; yet is there no more distressful sight on this earth than a wicked old man! There is hope for the youthful offender: if his heart be cold, love may yet thoroughly and effectually warm it; if he be without reverence, without kindness, without charity, regeneration is possible. But if the heart of the veteran in years be hopelessly, naturally chilled, and dead; if he is cross, and turbulent, exacting, selfish, tyrannical, and without mental power, then may all the saints unite to guard and defend the woman who is bound to him!—for of all mortals is she most wretched.

It was all the worse for Miss Job that she was kind and forgiving, and watchful and careful—all the worse for her that she had so much respect for age—the worse for her that boldness did not set up its throne on her tongue, and issue its laws as plainly as the tyrant's were spoken! If she had married the man because he was rich, in the expectation that he would, ere long, go the way of all the earth, it would have all been very well that matters took the turn they did: if she had bound herself to Mr. Townsend in order that she might secure a home, the home she thereby gained would have been just such as she deserved. But, reader, it was only in the spirit of self-sacrifice, in the spirit of charity, that she wedded!—because, feeling herself of no use in the world, when appealed to to make the comfort of the last days of one who had for years been a sort of benefactor, supplying her with work from his shop, and paying her moderately well therefor, she felt that her duty was to give her consent. A mistaken sense of duty she had, alas! But Miss Job herself would have avowed it as her firm belief, if questioned, to err on the right side was best.

Besides laboring incessantly with her needle on the black cloth, as aforetime, which her miserly husband commanded, there was such a constant, watchful attendance on all the man's whims and wishes exacted—exacted, too, in a "black dog, do your duty," sort of way—that, had not Miss Job become nearly perfected in the furnace of affliction and trial, her human nature would have indignantly rebelled: she would have sought, and forced from all intelligent jurymen under the sun, a right to "dissolve the union."

Ten years of martyrdom!—it is no trifling thing, reader; and then to think he left her a beggar after all!—giving his very considerable property to people who would not have lifted a hand to help him at any time. Oh, it was a grievous wrong he did that woman!

"Her wrongs shall cling around his neck, to hinder him rising with the just:
For his last, most solemn act, hath linked his name with liar,
And the crime of Ananias is branded on his brow."

Yet, mark what followed! The little, old, two-story frame building, her former habitation, was standing yet: to it the widow's eyes at once directed when strangers came to occupy her sometime abode. And, one day, above the narrow door a little ancient sign, "Miss Job, tailoress and dressmaker," again reared its head.

Yes! she had taken her old name again, and by that was she addressed—for people who respected her, and these were many, thought it an unnecessary insult to apply to her any longer that dead man's cognomen. Many were the tea-ing "indignation meetings" held in those days in the village, on account of that outrageous will of Mr. Townsend; and though the resolutions, on such occasions unanimously adopted, were never presented to the widow in due form, yet were they betrayed in the increase of work given her, and in the increase of the whole neighborhood's kindness. Never would Miss Job suffer any, in her hearing, in the height of their zeal, to rail out against the departed: if, in their enthusiasm, friends ventured on such ground, they were speedily silenced with a gentle "Hush, he is dead! you shouldn't talk against the dead."

Miss Job never went into mourning: in this case she felt it would be a mockery. There was no grief in her heart for the old man's death, save that of the Christian sorrow over the lost sinner. She wept at his funeral, true—and they were not "crocodile tears" she shed; because it was an awful thought to her that a fellow-mortal, who had seen the threescore and ten allotted years, should have gone into the pure and Holy Father's presence, without having assumed the garments of the redeemed. She wept, because he was an immortal, and, therefore, in remembrance of his past, feared for him!

Miss Job had grown very old in those ten years of bondage. Ah, she had looked upon such fearful Egyptian darkness! She had trodden in such wearying haste through that mighty Red Sea, pursued by the demons of a vile, malicious, selfish heart! She had grown very old, and yet was there strength in her limbs and strength in her heart. And what a sunbeam of peace was that which lighted her face with genial light! Oh, it is such a comfort that years make little impress on the countenance whose attractiveness is not dependent on youthful bloom and freshness! Red locks grow seldom gray, light eyes wot not of fading, and the expression of a face, linked to a heart like Seraphina Job's, must needs grow "brighter and brighter unto the perfect day."

Still by the little window of the tiny house she sat and sewed. Still on the Sabbath, and on Wednesday evening, went she, hymnbook and Bible in hand, to the sanctuary, withholding never the outward service, whereby, as well as in her inner life, she confessed her Master before men. Still was her trembling hand (for it always trembled at such times) raised to give the half of every week's earnings to the poor fund. Still on deeds of active charity her little bent form went forth. Still though she, and not always without tears, upon the love

of her youth. Still laid she that Divine consolation to her heart, "In heaven we shall know even as we are known."

"Heigh-ho! it is a rainy day, Miss Job; so lay aside your work. If the clouds are black as the vests you manufacture, do lift your eyes to them." But no; with her sweet voice humming still,

"From Greenland's icy mountains,"

she plods away for dear life—for dear mercy's sake, rather, because this day's earnings are devoted in her own mind to a peculiar purpose. Oh, reader, what a pleasant thing is a romance, if it be not too sorrowful!

But hold now; why should that gentleman with the spectacles look up with such curiosity at the little old sign, "Miss Job, tailoress and dress-maker?" Perhaps he is an antiquarian; he looks one, I am sure. Yet that respectable quality gives him no right to peer into the window of the house with so much curiosity. May be he is in search of lodgings. Yes, he must be, for he knocks, and, at the gentle "Come in," shuts his umbrella and enters boldly. Pshaw! nothing but a tract agent.

In the name of all things forlorn, reader, will not this be a pretty ending of our story, the mere recording of a conversation that followed the entrance of this man?

"I have books to sell, ma'am. All sorts of books in my line: tracts, missionary periodicals, Life of Mrs. Judson—of *both* of them—Memoir of Harriet Newell, and so forth. Shall I hope to find a purchaser here?"

The stranger spoke in a very subdued, patient way. Miss Job looked at him, and thought he must have traveled a long distance, and been unsuccessful in his sales, and, in the kindliness of her good spirit, she said at once—

"Yes, certainly. I like to read the lives of missionaries. Let me look at them. Is it Fanny Forester's Life of Mrs. Judson you have? She is such a sweet writer! What a noble woman she must be!"

"It *is* her work. You'll like it very much, I venture to say. I have sold a great many copies of the book. People, generally, have a great admiration for the present Mrs. Judson."

He opened the package of books; and, while Miss Job examined them, the stranger fixed his eyes upon her, conning the features of her face to his heart's content, musing thus, as he did so, "Great God, it is certainly she! How old she looks! Poor girl, she has seen troubled and hard times, I fear! God have mercy on us!"

Selecting three of the volumes, the woman said—

"I will take these."

"Thank you. Here is another work; it may not have attracted your notice in the great flood of books printed now-a-days. It is a work I wrote myself; for I have been a missionary."

Miss Job became quite excited as she heard this. She remembered one other who would fain have been a missionary. She could not speak; but reaching forth her hand, eagerly grasped the book.

"The India Mission-Ground," was lettered, in gilt, on the neat black cover. She looked sadly on the title for a moment, then opened the volume. "By Thomas Rich Muir." Those light eyes! they lacked not expression then. And what a glow was that overspreading the pale thin face of Miss Job, as she looked and looked at the book and at the man!

She stood up then—the volumes fell from her hands—and oh, what a "world of hope and fear" was in that cry—

"In the name of the great Lord, who are you? *I* knew a Thomas Muir!"

Ah, curiosity! why does that girl in the street stop short, unmindful of the rain, to look in through the window of that little parlor of "Miss Job, tailoress?" Why does that wandering boy vouchsafe to pause in his vagrancy to peer over the girl's shoulder, and, in his emotion, exclaim against the frantic embrace of that strange man, and "horrid homely old Miss Job?"

Desperate is the curiosity of a street audience! Ye fighting terriers and runaway steeds, testify! Haste we to draw the curtain. Ladies and gentlemen, we appeal to you; retire, disperse, and leave those reunited ones alone. I beseech you, go; and when Miss Job informs me of the story of her true, living love's adventures, you shall have them, free and full.

Poor, dear Seraphina! we will, meantime, rejoice with her, now that her time of rejoicing has really and truly come. We will, moreover, lay a little of consolation to our own hearts, as we remember that "virtue has its own reward," and never fails of finding it, in one place or another.

SONG.

BY BEATA.

"Ah," said Lucy, "he stays so long!"

Did ye see my love in that fair countrie,
Far over the sounding main?
Red gold and bright fame to seek went he,
But he comes not back again;
He went, when the leaves from the trees fell fast,
Away to that far countrie;
But a long twelvemonth and more has past,
And he comes not back to me!

If ye see my love in that fair countrie,
Tell him to hasten away;
From the breath of home, 'mid wild hills free,
How can he longer stay!
He may win bright fame, he may win red gold,
Away in that far countrie;
But better the heart which ne'er grows cold
Then bid him return to me.

murmuring of a fountain added a thoughtful repose to these apparently living statues. A solitary guard, high in office, watches the vestibule of the audience chamber. Just over the doorway, within, hung a ball of gold studded with precious stones, and about it great chains of rich pearl. The floor was covered with crimson velvet, embroidered in gold and pearls. The throne was supported by four pillars plated with gold. The roof was richly gilded, and suspended from it were solid golden balls. Many cushions, exquisitely embroidered with pearls and jewels, lay in luxurious variety.

The ambassadors were led in, and supported under the arms by Turkish dignitaries, who, at a given distance, placed their hands upon their necks, bowing down their heads until their foreheads touched the floor.

These ceremonies being over, the kuzler aga, Amine approached the outer gate, and presented a basket covered with a rich napkin, stating that it was a present from the Sultana Roxalana, who craved an audience with the sultan.

(To be continued.)

ELLEN LITCHFIELD.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

EDITED BY MISS MEETA M. DUNCAN.

"Thou know'st not gold's effects:
Tell me her father's name, and 'tis enough."
Taming the Shrew.

"Beware of desperate steps.—the darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away."
COWPER.

MY ancestors were "townspeople;" that is, for many generations they had lived exclusively in Philadelphia, following the different callings and professions adapted to men of education in our country. They had never furnished a President to the nation, a Governor to the State, nor held that doubtful honor, the office of mayor of the city; but they had been well known and respected in their native town. The various fluctuations of fortune, arising from the equal division of property peculiar to our institutions, affected them as much as they do other people: one generation, perhaps, exhibiting a successful merchant; the next, ten children, dividing equally the wealth of their parent, and obliged to exercise their faculties, and labor in turn for those who came after them and required their fostering care. Among a large share of successful lawyers, physicians, and merchants, our family tree, like most others, put forth its worthless scions—idle spendthrifts and good-for-nothing fellows; yet, on the whole, they were worthy people. Grandmothers, when appealed to, averred that the Litchfields had always been among our "most respectable families," and the "oldest inhabitant" quoted his cotemporary of that name as one whose career gave weight to this assertion. It was reserved for my grandfather, however, to change the name respectable into influential. He was the Napoleon of the family! Shrewd, energetic, far-seeing, and untiringly industrious, he took his "tide at the flood," and it "led on to fortune." With the prescience which always accompanies genius, he embarked fearlessly in a branch of manufactures at that period unattempted in our country, and the result was brilliant success and an enormous fortune. My grandfather rose astonishingly in the opinion of his fellow-citizens; people pointed him out in the streets; his opinions were quoted, his words were oracles, and his interest was canvassed for all manner of things.

The whole Litchfield family mounted several rounds higher on the social ladder. Indeed, they could go no higher, and the wonder is that they did not become dizzy! But for subsequent events, which removed them from such influences, they no doubt would have done so.

The migratory bump so peculiar to our people—developed, we must not doubt, by that same high Wisdom which causes the whirlwind to rise and the wind to blow, that it may carry, on its storm-borne wings, the tiny seed which is to ripen to some wise end in a distant spot—had heretofore been passive in our family; but my grandfather's mental throes heaved it into being. It was necessary for his projects that he should no longer be a dweller in a city. A small town had already sprung up in the neighborhood of the extensive works and factories of which he was originator and proprietor, and it was proper that he should dwell where his interests lay. Consequently, without delay, the furniture, plate, and valuables of the family—which, perhaps, I should, poetically and metaphorically speaking, designate, in Byronic phrase, our "household gods"—were removed to a new home; and my grandfather left the bones of his forefathers and the dust of his native place far behind him, with scarce a pang. From that time forward, instead of being "townspeople," they were "country-folks."

My grandfather, though fond of making money, was, like all Americans, not the least indisposed to spending it; so he built my grandmother, who had an eye to luxury and expense, a fine spacious mansion, which she had *carte blanche* to furnish according to her own taste, and surrounded it with tasteful and extensive grounds, which, being situated some distance from the new-born town, nature aided

greatly in perfecting. The original title-deeds of the property, still extant, in designating its boundary lines, described it as "bounded on the east by the River Delaware, and on the west by the 'Back Woods,'" a vagueness of description which carries us back most deliciously to the primitive times. These "back woods," however, among the earliest to disappear beneath the hatchet of the first settlers of the State, had left, nevertheless, many an acre of woodland, many a rich belt of forest trees upon the estate, to ennoble and beautify the scenery. This feature of the land suggested to my grandmother, who was a great novel-reader, a high-sounding name for the place, which was forthwith christened "Maple Park," from the fine maple trees which abounded on the estate; the village which had sprung up under my grandfather's auspices having long since assumed, by common consent, his name.

My grandfather had but two children, my father and a daughter, who married a lawyer of Philadelphia of promising talents. My father, who inherited no portion of his father's energy or grasp of mind, was made a partner, on his reaching manhood, in all my grandfather's vast undertakings; but his partnership, it is evident, must have been merely nominal, for my grandfather, with a herculean frame, the most untiring industry, and a powerful will, left him but little room to exercise the small amount of talent for business which he possessed.

My father, a man of dreamy, indolent habits, fond of books and the pursuits which literary tastes engender, it may easily be credited, made no opposition to remaining a cipher in a concern, attention to the details of which was so foreign to the natural bent of his mind. He was content to reap the benefits of his position without any of the trouble, more especially as he perceived that such a course would be most agreeable to his father.

My father, after having acquired the reputation of an old bachelor — a title rather prematurely thrown upon him, in pursuance of an old-fashioned habit which still clings to human nature—fell in love; but, as I cannot talk lightly, reader, of anything connected with the sacred name of my dear mother, you must be content with a few grave words respecting her. She was the daughter of a physician, who had acquired a wide-spread reputation in that part of the country in which Litchfield is situated, and had retired to the quiet enjoyment of a handsome fortune, leaving his practice to his son, my mother's half-brother, the son of a former marriage. My mother was called from Philadelphia, where she was completing her education, to attend her father in his last illness. After his death, she became a member of her brother's family, who had been some years married, and under whose roof my father became acquainted with her.

My mother was one of the brightest and most happy-hearted of human beings; the atmosphere of her mind was pure sunshine. All energy, sweetness, and sprightliness, she scarcely required the high degree of personal loveliness which she possessed to win all hearts. That my father should have yielded to her attractions is in no wise remarkable, as total opposition of character is as often a bond of love as sympathy. They married; and, for eighteen years, my father was the happiest of husbands. Of a numerous offspring, myself and two brothers, ten and twelve years my juniors, were the only survivors. In my fourteenth year, the great affliction of my life befell me. My mother was taken from me by sudden illness, which calamity followed very rapidly upon the loss of my grandparents, who had died only the previous year.

This terrible blow almost prostrated my father; and occurring, as it did, at a period when all his energies were required in the management of the vast undertakings bequeathed him by his father, produced, eventually, the most disastrous effects.

While my mother lived, I thought I loved her dearly; but never, until she was gone, did I know how entirely her influence, her gentle ministerings had made my home the paradise it was to me; how irreparable, in fact, was my loss! And when my father proposed that I should go to his sister in Philadelphia, for the purpose of completing my education, which I now, alas! had no fond mother to superintend, I joyfully acceded to his plan; my aunt Spenser very cheerfully consenting to take the whole charge of me for the next three years.

"Your uncle Drayton thinks, my dear," sighed my father, "that I should keep you at home, and talks of the benefit of home-education for girls; but he forgets that, in your aunt's family, you will be surrounded by domestic influences, and that I am totally unequal to managing and fretting with such troublesome people as governesses. Besides, was not his sister, your dear mother, educated as you are to be? And, if my Ellen but resembles her mother, what more could I wish for her?"

That my uncle Drayton disapproved of my going to town was an additional reason for me to desire it. He had always been an object of my childish aversion, in which amiable feeling my aunt and Cousin Tom fully shared. Separated from my uncle's family but by a few miles, and in constant intercourse with them, I had rebelled, at a very early age, against their influence. My aunt Drayton, who died only a short period previous to my mother, systematically interfered in all our affairs. If I wanted a blue dress, she had the most unanswerable reasons to prove that it should be crimson. If I wished my frocks cut low, she demonstrated clearly that they should be made high. If I insinuated a wish for a pair of kid slippers, she asserted that strong boots were better for growing girls and country wear. If, in my childish love of finery, I adopted a ribbon or a bow, she called me "Miss Betty Blackberry," referring to some prototype into whose history I was determined never to inquire. I was incessantly scolded for not wearing my sunbonnet, rebuked for inattention in church, and hinted at for being dainty in my food. She told my mother, in my presence, that I ought to have my

fingers rapped every time I gnawed my nails; and she was the means of breaking off an eternal friendship which I had formed with a girl of my own age in the village. In short, my aunt Drayton I cordially detested, and, when she died, I did not even persuade myself that I felt sorry. How could I, when the only dress I had ever had made to my satisfaction in my life was the mourning one which I put on for her?

My uncle, with fewer opportunities, was almost as disagreeable as his wife. My earliest recollections of him were connected with nauseous doses and forced abstinence. Twice a year, at the least, I was forcibly imprisoned between his knees whilst he examined my mouth, and decided, imperiously, whether I was to be sent to the dentists. My uncle Drayton's opinion regulated the thickness of my soles, the putting on and taking off of my flannel, the temperature of my baths, and my hours for going to rest. To all these grievances he added a most offensive manner, saying, when I made any resistance, "Tut, tut, child! do as you are bid, and show some sense!" Every scheme I entertained, every enjoyment I contemplated, received its "damper" from him. In short, the whole current of my existence was tinged with a bitter Draytonian infusion.

As to my cousin Tom, I think he was the most disagreeable of the three. From the height of his manly eminence—for he was seven years my senior—he looked down upon me with a philosophical sort of contempt. He took the liberty of telling me offensive truths upon all occasions, and, when I resented his comments, he laughed at my "airs," and told me not to fly into a "tantrum." He blessed himself, and wondered if all girls were so stupid, if I asked his opinion upon some knotty point in my studies, and ridiculed me when I wept over an endless task. He always detected my earliest spring freckle, and quizzed my latest hobby. He was the first to perceive my shortcomings, the last to echo my praise. The last, did I say? Excuse me, reader, for falling so readily into the trap of an antithesis; he never praised me at all! If my self-love had waited for his fostering care, it would have remained a stunted plant forever. Fortunately for my vanity, this affected me but little; my contempt for Tom quite equaled his poor opinion of me. I was often enough in town with my aunt to be capable of comparing him with the polished young men I saw there, and Tom would in no wise stand the comparison. Rough and unpolished in manner, clumsy in person, careless in dress, cynical in speech, and utterly devoid of every graceful or refined accomplishment, I thought him, in my secret heart, a country bumpkin, and heeded, as little as it was possible for a girl of my age to heed, the constant snubbing which I received from him. How glad I was to think he was not my own cousin! It may easily be conceived that the separation from this branch of my family was a matter of congratulation rather than regret to me. But the parting from my home, my father, my little brothers, and the nurse who had watched over me from my birth, spite of the brilliant visions which, in the perspective of my imagination, my future residence in town was decked, was a most painful trial. My father blessed me in silent emotion; my little brothers clung to me with entreaties to stay with them; while dear old Mammy Hetty, weeping and calling me her dear child, implored me to get my learning as soon as I could, and come home again.

The *adieux* of my uncle and cousin were characteristic—

"Farewell, Ellen," said my uncle. "Take care of yourself. Don't neglect your exercise, and remember what I told you about tight lacing: half the boarding-school girls in the world kill themselves in their endeavors to look like wasps."

"Good-by, Nelly," said Tom, shaking my hand with his huge fist, which was like the clasp of a vice; "try to improve yourself, child, for you know you need it."

I was received by my aunt Spenser with great affection. She was a woman of excellent temper and good feelings, a dutiful wife, and most devoted mother; her chief faults arising from too great an addiction to the glitter of the world, show and fashion. This opinion, however, is the result of more mature reflection. At the period I speak of, I was blinded by the glare which surrounded her. To my youthful mind, she was the personification of refined elegance. Her manners, her dress, her household, all deeply impressed me. My uncle was a quiet, reserved man, who exercised no rule except in his office. My cousins, two daughters grown up and just "out," and one about my own age, and two boys younger, were all handsome and carefully trained, and I was received by them with the greatest cordiality. An affectionate intercourse had always existed between my aunt's family and our own. Her house was our house when any of us were in town, and, during the summer months, we had constantly some members of her family visiting us; "Maple Park," from its beautiful situation and superior accommodations, offering great attractions to the dwellers in a hot and dusty city—attractions greatly enhanced by the genial hospitality of my parents.

I was therefore no stranger in my new home, and, with the pliability of youth, soon adapted myself to their habits. After a week's holiday, I was placed at Madame Duval's Academy as "a day boarder;" that is to say, I slept and took my morning and evening meals at my aunt's, the rest of my time, except on Sundays, being passed at school. Madame Duval had educated my mother, and was, for this reason, chosen by my father to perform the same office for me, which office, I may here add, she performed most faithfully. Many more docile pupils she may have had, many who profited more fully by her instructions, but never one whose faith in her precepts was more entire. She had been my mother's instructress, and that was enough for me.

Deep in the unseen recesses of my heart, the memory of my mother was cherished with a fervent, holy love. It was a name which led me on through countless difficulties, and supported me through many trials. Child as I was when she left us, the impression made upon my mind by her firmness, gentleness, and persuasive good sense was indelible. Though, with the buoyancy of youth, I soon recovered from her loss, I never forgot her—never ceased to feel her secret influence. Each day, from the light-hearted revelings of youth, I returned to my chamber to think of her; her image was ever near me when I offered up my nightly prayer; and my most earnest longings for goodness were prompted by the desire to be worthy of her, the hope of being permitted to rejoin her hereafter.

My aunt Spenser's was called a very gay house, which means that it was a rallying-place for all the idle and pleasure-seeking of her acquaintance. Heaven had endowed my cousins with the organ of music, and my aunt did her best to show her gratitude for the gift. Louisa, Julia, and Fanny were placed at the piano in their high chairs, and, at ten years of age, they were prodigies. This accidental development settled the character of the family. My aunt became the high priestess of music, her house the temple, and every child a votary. Musical *soirées* and rehearsals were a part of the business of her life. She patronized all the professional talent within her reach, and moved mountains to entertain at her house the foreign musical birds of passage. As was proper and right, such exertions did not go unrewarded. My aunt's nod of approbation spoke volumes in the eyes of the pretenders to musical enthusiasm, who compose about two-thirds of the audiences that meet together to listen to and go into raptures about what they can neither understand nor feel. She was called a person of fine taste, with great knowledge of music and a correct ear. Her opinion was quoted, and she gave it with the same good faith with which it was asked, little dreaming that she herself, poor lady, was one of the greatest of pretenders in a science of which she, in truth, knew nothing. That my aunt was insincere, I would not have you think. She was only the dupe of her own wishes and the weaknesses of others. My cousins were not beauties, neither were they remarkable for great brilliancy of mind; accomplishments must therefore be their passports to consideration. Providence had endowed them with ear and voice, and my aunt, like a good general, seized upon the advantages of nature, improved her position, and maneuvered them into a vantage-ground which, without this aid, they never could have attained. What at first was a matter of calculation afterwards became a hobby, and we all know how blindly hobbies lead us on.

Though music was the first occupation of the family, my aunt had shrewdness enough to know that there is a large sprinkling of people, very desirable as guests, who have simplicity of character and candor sufficient to acknowledge that they do not admire what they neither comprehend nor feel; people who like a song of Moore's, or a simple ballad, feelingly sung, but who have no taste for convulsive sobs, in bad Italian, and broken tympanums! These were invited and entertained; and Mrs Spenser's non-musical parties were thought, even by many would-be amateurs, in their secret hearts, more agreeable than those exclusively devoted to the concord of sweet sounds.

Catering thus for the general taste, Mrs. Spenser's reputation became established, and she fully enjoyed the reward of her well-earned success. It looked well to be seen at Mrs. Spenser's parties, and was politic to be numbered among her familiar acquaintance. Louisa and Julia, rather negative characters, owing to the *prestige* which surrounded them, were always attended to by the most desirable young men, and intimate with the most *recherché* young ladies. Mrs. Spenser's patronage was always among the first asked in favor of pic-nic parties, fancy fairs, and charity balls. She always got a good seat at a concert, no matter how late she came, and an excellent box at the opera, let the competition be ever so great.

It required a very untiring person to get through all that fell to my aunt's share; for, like all American wives and mothers, she managed her own household and superintended her children faithfully. But she had, in a small way, a share of my grandfather's energy of character and activity, though lacking his strong sense, and they helped her on amazingly.

My uncle was a quiet, reserved man, naturally given to snarling, but kept wonderfully from following this propensity by the matrimonial muzzle. Fred and Will Spenser were, like most boys between the ages of nine and fifteen, well enough when under control, but turbulent, self-willed, and tyrannical if left to themselves.

I fell somewhat into the shadow of my aunt's good opinion, when she discovered that I had neither ear nor voice enough to make a distinguished musician. Madame Duval was desired to do her best with me; but I saw, by the shaking of my aunt's head, that her request was made without hope. As for my cousins, I fancied they liked me better for my deficiency. It may be that they were pleased at not having a rival following close upon their steps, or, perhaps, they were glad not to have another candidate for the use of the piano and harp. Let this be as it may, my cousins were very kind to me, and I liked them very much, which liking continued long after the conventional glare, which had at first blinded my judgment, passed away, and I found them shallow in mind, and prompted by any rather than exalted feelings. They were, however, good-natured, in a general way, light-hearted, gay, and pleasant companions.

I had two vacations a year, the Christmas holidays and one longer one in the summer. My first, which occurred at Christmas, I was obliged to pass

in town, owing to indisposition; and it was not until the following summer, after an absence of nearly a year, that I was permitted to return home. My father had visited me during the interval; but I was pining to see my little brothers and Mammy Hetty, and to behold again my old haunts. I spent six blissful weeks, almost without alloy. My father was truly happy in having me near him, the boys were never tired of telling me how glad they were to have me at home, and dear old Mammy Hetty did her best to spoil me. Even my uncle Drayton was less grim than usual. He told me I looked very well, and only found fault with me once for wearing "gossamer" stockings. My cousin Tom was, of course, as disagreeable as ever; but I had learned to oppose his taunts, criticisms, and interference by constant silence, instead of petulant replies. By this means, and by keeping out of his way, he interfered very little with my comfort.

My second Christmas was also spent in town, in consequence of the marriage of my cousin Louisa, an event which took place about that time. As I was joined there by my father and the boys, however, I regretted very little being deprived of my visit home. Louisa had made a match very gratifying to my aunt, and her marriage was celebrated with proportionate *empressement*.

My second visit home was even more agreeable than the last. I began now to be looked upon as a grown up young lady. The boys, my father, the servants, and even Uncle Drayton, were more deferential in their manner to me than they had ever been before; and, my cousin Tom being luckily absent on a long journey, nothing interfered to damp my self-complacency during the visit.

My third Christmas holidays were passed at home; but, I confess, with less satisfaction than heretofore. I found the country inexpressibly dull and gloomy, at this dead season, in comparison with the stir and bustle of a town life and the gayety of my aunt's house. My father suspected this, I am sure, for he drew me to him one day, and told me he hoped his little girl was not acquiring a taste for a mode of life different from that in which her lot was cast. I disdained the suspicion; for I did not then understand clearly my own feelings. I should have repelled it, however, under any circumstances; for I saw how much my father's happiness was bound up in mine, and appreciated, even then, the sacrifice which he had made in separating himself from me for what he considered my advantage. Often and often did I detect him watching me with a moistened eye. Very often did he draw me to him and tell me, with a choking voice, how much I grew like my dear mother. Seeing thus how necessary my peace was to his, nothing would have induced me to pain him by any admission of weariness or distaste for my home.

With my cousin Tom, who was ever making offensive insinuations, I was less careful. When he chose to tell me I was getting to be a fine lady—when he asserted that I "turned up my nose" at the country and country people, I shrugged my shoulders and congratulated him upon his penetration. In proportion as he cried down the pursuits and pleasures of a town life, so did I exaggerate their charms, and, in pure opposition to him, depreciate every simple natural pleasure which had made the charm of my early years.

"'It is a lucky thing that you come home to remain next summer, Nelly; otherwise you would be utterly spoiled—which would, indeed, be a terrible pity, as my poor uncle has but the one daughter to look to for comfort in his old age."

"You may reserve your pity till it is called for," I replied. "Papa is not likely to agree in your opinions respecting me, and I have no fear of ever being anything but what he approves."

"Indeed! What a fortunate young lady you are! Pray, Nelly, instruct me. Tell me how it feels to have such a warm, comfortable glow of self-complacency expanding over one? Why, Nelly, instead of waiting till next summer, I think my uncle had better keep you at home now. I shall advise him to do so."

"You may save yourself the trouble," I replied, coolly. "It is already settled that I am not even to visit home next summer. I am going to Saratoga with my aunt; my father accompanies us; and the following winter I pass with Mrs. Spenser, who brings me out."

"Phew!" ejaculated Tom, in a long-drawn whistle. "*That 's* the idea, is it? Pray, Nelly, what do young ladies 'come out' for? Can you tell me?"

"'Coming out' is being introduced into society as a grown-up young lady," I replied, with a patronizing air. "Next winter I shall be nearly eighteen, and Aunt Spenser thinks it is time for me to be out."

"Ah, indeed! Do you think Miss Patty Thompson or Peter Field will require that ceremonial of you before they acknowledge your womanly pretensions?"

"Patty Thompson! Peter Field! What do you mean? I cannot comprehend what the Litchfield milliner and shoemaker have to do with my private affairs."

"Nothing farther than this: As you are to live close upon Litchfield, and not in Philadelphia, it seems scarcely worth while to take the trouble to convince strangers of a circumstance which, however important to you, cannot interest them. Now, Miss Patty and old Peter, like myself, remember when you were born; and, I dare say, they found out, as I did, the day after you came home, that, in your own opinion, you had taken your womanly 'degree' already."

"Strangers!" I exclaimed, with surprise. "You seem to forget that I have a large circle of acquaintance in Philadelphia—many dear friends. And, as to living all my life at Litchfield"—lowering my voice—"I should be very sorry to anticipate *that*."

"Phew!" whistled Tom again, in his most pro-

voking manner. "I see—I understand—I comprehend perfectly. You are not alarmingly opake, Nelly."

One reason, I believe, why I had always disliked my cousin Tom was that I never clearly understood him. Irony and mystification are very offensive to the young, and, with these weapons, my sensitive self-love had been incessantly goaded by him. I had a dim impression, even in early childhood, that Tom was always trying to irritate me, as a sort of pleasure to himself; but I never could puzzle out his true meaning—never tell when he was in earnest. The result, extreme dislike to him, was all I cared to ascertain. The same feeling still continued. Grown older, I could now better penetrate the nature and drift of his "speeches;" but I never felt sure of him, always avoided him when possible, shunned all argument with him when I could do so without "lessening my dignity," and had a secret contempt for his judgment, more especially when he attempted to give his opinion on matters connected with the polite world, on which points I considered him profoundly ignorant.

I had been dining, upon this occasion, with my uncle Drayton, and Tom was walking home with me, which will account for our prolonged colloquy.

"And how do you like your new cousin?" asked Tom. "I believe Louisa Spenser has made what is called a good match."

"Yes; very. I like Mr. Barton extremely. I think him a very nice person."

"'Nice person!' I suppose you think it very 'nice' to have that foolish phrase forever upon your tongue; but, if you did but know it, Nelly, it is very vulgar."

"Vulgar!" I ejaculated, with a contemptuous toss of the head, which implied, "How can you be a judge of such distinctions, being one of the vulgar yourself?"

"Yes, vulgar, child, as all bad imitations are. People who have any brains never copy. Because the English affect a perverted mode of speech, which, with their artificial distinctions of rank and station, they no doubt find a shelter from the risk of committing themselves, why should we copy their colloquial abominations? What is the definition of 'nice?' I dare say you don't know. A dictionary is too old-fashioned a book to form any part of your studies. Let me tell you, it signifies qualities very opposite from those you should, in truth, apply to the 'persons' whom you are speaking of usually. 'Nice' means *neat, accurate, delicate, dainty, squeamish*. Now, I am a man and a gentleman, two sufficient handles to my individuality; and, if any man were to call me a 'person,' I should take it as an insult, and treat him accordingly. If a lady should forget herself so far—unless it be yourself, Nelly, who are privileged by long habit to turn up your nose at and say saucy things to me—I should set her down as a fool."

"You need have no fear of me on that point," I replied. "There is not the slightest danger of my ever calling you 'a nice person.'"

"Well done, Nelly!" responded Tom, with a most vivacious and provoking laugh. "I forgive the tartness of your reply, in honor of the quick wit and candor which it exhibits; though, I assure you, you are wrong in supposing that the term 'nice' is not applicable to me. Let me prove to you that I am very 'nice,' notwithstanding your disapprobation of my thick boots, rough coat, and unfashionable hat. I am scrupulously 'neat.' Behold this shirt bosom; did you ever see linen of more unblemished whiteness? Look at this hand"—thrusting out his huge fist—"your own is not more stainless. Did you ever see me unshaved in your life? Did you ever see any young man's room more neat than my 'den' at home is? No old maid's parlor was ever 'nicer.' Then, Nelly, I am accuracy itself. I never forget to pay my bills, which a great many young men whom you call 'nice' unfortunately do; I never make assertions unless I can prove them; and I can testify to a miracle when your birthdays come round, upon which occasions, *par parenthèses*, I always wish you increase of wisdom. Then, I am 'squeamish.' Codfish and saur-kraut are fishy and vegetable witnesses of this one phase of my 'niceness.' I am nice, too, about your sex—very nice about you, Nelly, when I find you trying to enact one definition of your favorite word, namely, affecting to be very 'fine.'"

When my cousin Tom indulged me with a flood of words, as upon the present occasion, I always left him as soon as I was able. Seeing my little brothers in a neighboring field, I now hastened to join them, not forgetting to shoot my Parthean arrow, as I reached the other side of the gate, saying—

"Good-by, Cousin Tom! You won't need your dictionary to discover what that means!"

"Right, Nelly," cried out Tom, as I fled before him. "In your vocabulary it means, 'glad to get rid of you.' You perceive I understand your dictionary, though you won't study mine."

I am now approaching the period of my life into which events most important to my happiness, and the development of my character, were crowded. According to the promise which my father had made my aunt Spenser, I accompanied her to Saratoga Springs; my father, to my great regret, being detained at home by important business.

My aunt had scarcely become settled in her apartments at the hotel, before she was surrounded by a host of welcoming friends, who, all talking at once, attempted to render her *au fait* to the state of existing affairs; such as what "stars" were at the different houses; who were the lions and lionesses of the Springs; who the rival belles; who the most *recherché* beaux: what flirtations were on the carpet; what engagements had taken place: what "affairs" were too bad to be overlooked: who were the "fortunes," and who the penniless

pretenders; with a long list of delightful things to come off, in the shape of balls, breakfasts, pic-nics, gipsy parties, &c.

In all this din, my aunt was in her element; and, I confess, she acquired additional dignity in my eyes, from the importance which she appeared to possess in the eyes of all these stylish people, whose conversation was well calculated to make an unsophisticated young person believe that the world turned upon its axis for their especial benefit.

I had not been many days at the Springs, before I ceased to inform every new acquaintance that I was not yet "out." I looked so tall and womanly that it availed me nothing. Young ladies, a dozen years my seniors, took my arm familiarly as we walked the piazza, and told me their "experience." Young gentlemen with mustaches, and some oldish ones without, like young Norval, "hovered about my steps, and marked the path I took;" while my cousin Fanny, who was six months older than myself, being small and childish-looking, was left, perfectly unmolested, mistress of her own time. No young ladies made her their confidante; no insinuating gentlemen, old or young, followed her in her walks.

But this is disingenuous. When I commenced this narrative, I determined to sift out my own past thoughts and actions with an unfaltering will, to "extenuate nothing, to set down naught in malice," and, above all, to gloss over no truth. I know now, though I did not then, reader, that it was not my tall person and my cousin Fanny's little fairy figure and childish face that made this vast difference in the attention which we received. The smoothest and most fawning of the flatterers, who strove to persuade me that it was folly to keep me in the background as an embryo young lady, knew well, in their inmost hearts, that I was a simple, ingenuous school-girl, without a tithe of that knowledge and experience which would have fitted me to move in the false and artificial atmosphere in which I was placed. The truth is, the most exaggerated reports of my father's wealth were circulated at the Springs; reports which my aunt's deportment, mode of life, and conversation served to confirm; and it was as the only daughter of the wealthy Mr. Litchfield that I received the adulation of these very disinterested friends and admirers.

This better knowledge I had not, however, acquired then; and, as was to be expected, my little head, which, I was daily told by several scores of gentlemen, had the "*véritable tournure antique*," the true "Medicean *pose*," was completely turned; and I have no doubt that I played many a "fantastic trick before high Heaven," which, if I now paused to recall and dwell upon, would cause me to drop my pen, that I might cover my burning face with my hands.

In the midst of all this delirium of the senses, when my intoxicated vanity, growing with what it fed on, was insatiate of food, I could not fail to observe one young man of distinguished appearance, who, so far from courting our acquaintance, kept himself obstinately aloof from us. My cousin Julia, who was one of that numerous class of young ladies who always express themselves in superlatives, declared that she was "wild" to be introduced to him; while even Fanny, roused to an unusual degree of enthusiasm, declared his mustache to be "divine."

My aunt, whose masterly generalship no ordinary person could circumvent, had managed an introduction. It was one of those rapid surprises, *à la Napoleon*, which bear down all resistance; but, when her antagonist discovered her tactics, he exhibited equal skill in parrying them, and she got no further.

During all this skirmishing, I remained perfectly passive, and seemingly unconscious. But it was all seeming. I had noticed from the first that, if Mr. Flemming avoided an acquaintance with us, it was not from want of interest in *one* member at least of the party. In dining or drawing-room—at ball or concert, pleasure-party or promenade—even in church—whenever I turned my eyes in his direction, I always found his fixed upon me, till, at length, the interest which he inspired in me by this obstinate, yet flattering, scrutiny, became powerfully absorbing, and I was restless in society if the owner of those large, dark, serious eyes was absent. Of course, he must have been aware of my consciousness of his observation; for, though I had too much womanly self-respect, had been too properly brought up, to interchange glances with a stranger of a different sex, still he could not but see that I noticed his constant scrutiny.

Our friends talked to us of Mr. Flemming, wondered we did not know him, and dwelt upon his agreeable qualities, his fine manners, his fastidious taste, his conversational abilities, till my aunt and cousin, annoyed at his indifference, began to speak in disparaging terms of him. To me, however, his coldness, his reserve, his indifference possessed a powerful charm. I had been sated with adulation, with attentions, and the secret homage which I saw he paid me exercised a subtle, intoxicating influence over me, which I had never before experienced. In short, I was indulging in all the dreamy vagueness of a young girl's first romance, which, day by day, increased in strength and vividness.

Mr. Flemming was known to be the son of an ex-governor of one of the extreme Southern States. His family respectability was well established; though, personally, he was unknown to any of the visitors at the Springs. Nor had he availed himself largely of the facilities which, in our country, are so freely—too freely—afforded to strangers whose manners and appearance are prepossessing. Mr. Flemming's associates, however, though few, were among the most *recherché* at the Springs, and his reserve and exclusiveness made him only the more sought after.

We had dwelt beneath the same roof for a month without any further knowledge of him than I have described, when, one evening, while visiting one

of the mineral springs, I overheard a party of young Quakers, who had stopped for the night on their way from Lake George, conversing about the place and its attractions. Curious to know what people, whose education removed them so far from the frivolities of the life led here, would say, I paused to listen, and discovered that they had just returned from visiting the tomb of Margaret Davidson, and considered this the only object of interest in the place. As I listened to the comments of these intelligent people, I blushed as I remembered that I had been here a whole month without recollecting that, within a few minutes' walk, the ashes of this interesting girl reposed. Not one amid the hundreds of gay butterflies who flitted by me had ever mentioned the existence of this monument to youthful genius and piety; most of them had, perhaps, never heard of their gifted countrywoman. This, however, was not the case with me. I had pored over the histories of Margaret and her no less gifted sister, and wept over their untimely deaths, till, in the fullness of girlish enthusiasm, to have shared Margaret Davidson's genius, and enjoyed the high privilege of descending to posterity through Irving's matchless pen, I would gladly have shared her fate.

Determined to repair this oversight as soon as possible, I arose at an early hour the next morning to put my resolution into effect. I had inquired of the landlord, the evening before, the direction, and found no difficulty in discovering the spot. I remained some minutes beside the monument, filled with sadder and more elevated thoughts than had occupied my mind for many weeks, when I turned to go, for the night dew had fallen thickly, and my thin shoes were completely wet. As I retraced my steps, my foot slipped upon part of a broken tombstone, which lay half hidden in the earth, and I fell. I arose quickly, when, to my dismay, I discovered that I had severely wrenched my foot, and was unable to stand upon it without violent pain. I sat down upon a neighboring tombstone, and considered what to do. Walk I could not, and, in this lonely burial-ground, I might remain all day without being seen. A feeling of desolation, added to the pain of my sprained foot, quite unstrung me, and I bent my face upon my knees and wept unrestrainedly. A sudden rustling near by aroused me; I lifted my head, and a voice, which I recognized immediately, inquired if I was in want of any assistance? A burning blush covered my face, and, hastily drawing my gown over my injured foot, which had now begun to swell frightfully, I faltered out some confused expressions, the purport of which was that I had fallen, and hurt my foot so severely that I was unable to walk.

"Perhaps, with my assistance, Miss Litchfield," said Flemming—for it was he—"you may be able to reach one of the neighboring houses." And, stooping down, he offered me his arm.

By this time, I was somewhat more composed, and, thanking him, I accepted his aid. But it was in vain; my foot was too severely hurt to put it to the ground without extreme agony, and I nearly fell again. Seeing, at a glance, the extent of my injury, Flemming replaced me gently on the marble slab, and, begging me to be composed till he should return, he ran off at full speed. Before many minutes, he returned, accompanied by a laborer carrying a large arm-chair, in which I was placed and borne easily to a house not far distant. Here a country wagon with a linen tilt was procured, and I was lifted, still seated in the chair, into it, and conveyed to the hotel.

For more than a week I was kept imprisoned in my room, with my foot upon a sofa; yet never had I spent a more blissful week! Every morning some little offering, with Mr. Flemming's compliments, came to brighten the day. Choice flowers, fruits, books, and luxuries not procurable at the Springs, were constantly on my table.

My aunt, since my accident, had become one of Mr. Flemming's warmest admirers. All the frost-work which enveloped him having melted away, he was constantly at her side; and she once, quite inadvertently, poor woman, in dwelling upon this happy issue, congratulated me upon my accident!

At the expiration of a week, I was carried down daily to a quiet little parlor, where I received, at times, my most intimate associates. Here, also, was Flemming introduced, by my aunt, on the first day of my removal. Notwithstanding I expected him, and knew the very hour he was coming, still, when he came, I was so fluttered that, though he took my hand, held it for an instant in his, and murmured something about the precious privilege of being of service to me, I never could recall exactly what he said, nor remember one word of my own agitated thanks.

From this time forward, Mr. Flemming became a daily visitor to our little parlor. He was the life of our circle. He charmed my aunt; he charmed my cousins; and need I say how entirely he charmed me? He would saunter in of a morning, with a bunch of wild flowers in his hand, and chat beside my sofa, or sometimes, with a book, would read some pleasant tale or poem.

Things went on in this way for a fortnight, and my aunt began to talk of returning home. My foot was nearly well, and I would soon be able to travel. One morning, a raffle having attracted all my usual visitors, I was sitting alone, when the door opened and Flemming entered the room. It was the first time I had received him alone, and a little feeling of awkwardness disconcerted me. I apologized for the absence of my aunt and cousins, without recollecting that he could scarcely be ignorant of what occupied them. But Flemming was so composed, so gentle and respectful in his manner, that I was very soon reassured; and, as he drew his chair near me, and began to converse in his usual quiet manner, I soon forgot that we were alone.

"Do you know," said he, abruptly, looking me steadily in the face with a peculiar expression, "that I sometimes think I have known you in

some other state of existence? Have you never detected me watching you before I knew you?"

The blood mounted to my face; but, before I could frame an answer, he continued—

"I know you must; you could not avoid it. Yes," he added, in a slow, distinct voice, "I have known and loved you in some other world!"

I was very young, very inexperienced, but I knew that Mr. Flemming was making love to me; and, agitated and frightened, I looked round and half rose from my seat to go; but, before I could carry out my half-formed purpose, Flemming left his chair, and, seating himself on the sofa beside me, he took both my hands in his.

"Ellen," he said, in the same low, calm voice, "I love you! Will you not love me, and become my wife?"

I was too agitated to speak—to know what to say; but when he looked into my face, and asked me if I disliked him, he must have found his answer there; for he drew my head upon his shoulder and soothed me with gentle words. I did not speak, but shed tears, which, if they were tears of happiness, must bring bliss very near to agony. Flemming begged me to be composed, and I was forced to be so; for we heard steps approaching, and, as they came nearer, we distinguished my aunt's voice. Flemming, quick as thought, disappeared through the low, open window, and, the next moment, my aunt Spenser appeared.

My agitation could not be concealed; and I had no desire that it should. My aunt received my communication very differently from what I had expected. Flemming was so great a favorite of hers that I thought she would be highly gratified at his proposal. But she replied that this was a very serious matter, and she did not know what my father would say to it. She mused a little while, and then said—

"Ellen, we must leave here to-morrow; and you must promise me that you will not see Mr. Flemming, nor communicate with him, till you have your father's sanction. I shall write him a note, and exact the same of him."

I was perfectly willing to comply with my aunt's request; I appreciated, in an imperfect degree, the responsibility of her situation, and I felt perfectly certain that Flemming would follow us immediately. Of my father's approbation I was assured. I knew he loved me too well to refuse anything that would make me so happy, and prepared to leave Saratoga with a light heart.

If Flemming promised my aunt not to communicate with me before I left, he did not keep his promise. I did not see him again, for my aunt remained near me till I retired to bed; but in my room I found my first love letter! I wish I had this letter now—I wish it had not been destroyed. Then, reader, you would say that such love, so pure, so exalted, so disinterested as was there depicted, deserved all the first fond devotion of a woman's heart.

We left Saratoga, and, on the third day, reached Litchfield. As he pressed me to his heart, a tear rolled down my dear father's cheek, and, for the first time, a misgiving as to his willingness to part with me seized me. But I was soon consoled. Frederic had said, in *the* letter, that, assured of my affection, he would follow me to the ends of the earth, and Litchfield was very far from being the end of the earth, but a very comfortable home, where I knew we could live, happily as the day is long, with my dear father.

My aunt took the earliest opportunity to see my father alone, and communicate to him a full account of Mr. Flemming and his proposals, dwelling, with particular emphasis, upon her own great prudence in not permitting me to see or communicate with my lover till he had received his approbation. Whether my father enlightened my aunt, in any degree, upon the article of prudence, I know not; but when he sent for me, and gravely questioned me as to this affair, I left him with a saddened heart.

"I must know something more," he said, "of this young man than your aunt is able to tell me, ere I give the treasure of my life to him."

Information of one kind came sooner than we expected, but from a source which I repudiated and despised with the whole strength of my nature. The morning after my arrival, my cousin Tom came over to see me; and, on being informed by my father of my attachment, and of my lover's proposals, he told my father that he knew Flemming well. He said that he had been a classmate of his at Princeton, and that he had been ignominiously expelled for his profligacy! My poor father, credulous, and easily alarmed on a subject so vital to his happiness, flew to me with this intelligence; but I laughed his information to scorn. I sought my cousin; and, with a white face and flashing eye, I asked him how he dared to calumniate a man whose shoe latchets he was not worthy to tie.

Tom looked at me gravely, and said—

"It is true."

"What your motive may be," I replied, in bitter scorn, "in attempting to ruin my happiness, I know not, nor do I care. I will even deal charitably with you, and say that you have not invented this tale, that you mean some other man; but if ever you dare to utter these foul lies again in this house, it will be in the spirit of the dastard, who maligns, behind his back, the man whom he is afraid to meet face to face!"

Tom's countenance became pale and agitated; but he answered, calmly—

"I am not afraid, Ellen, to say to Mr. Flemming's face all I have said to your father; nor am I mistaken in the man. Governor Flemming, of ———, had not two sons, of the same age, called Frederic. There can be no mistake; and I hope, my dear cousin, that you will one day do me more justice than you are able to yield me now."

My anger, my rage, had been so excessive, that I was unable to control it; but it exhausted itself

by its own violence, and subsided in a burst of tears, which, too proud to let my detested cousin see, I fled to my own room to conceal. That evening, however, all my evil feelings were absorbed in one of triumphant joy. My father received a respectful, sensible letter from Mr. Flemming, applying for my hand, and inclosing one from his father, just received, in answer to one he had written him the day after my accident, when he said, already deeply in love with me, he had resolved to endeavor to win my regard.

The letter of Governor Flemming was one of the most cordial and touching specimens of fatherly interest and affection it was possible to conceive. The tears coursed down my cheeks as I read it; even my father was evidently moved by it. He spoke of Frederic as the pride and ornament of his old age, dwelling upon his high principles and integrity; and, in sanctioning his desire to marry, he prayed that the woman of his choice might prove worthy of him. The letter concluded with a playful postscript from one of his sisters, and a tender little message from his mother.

With what pride did I read these touching evidences of affection from my lover's family! How much nearer did it bring him to me! Already I was with him, in imagination, in his distant home, visiting these loved relatives, and convincing them, by my devotion to their dear one, that I was worthy of him.

My father had exacted of me a promise that I would neither see nor correspond with my lover for three months, during which time he should take means to inform himself of his character and worthiness to possess my hand. This prohibition now sat lightly upon my heart. Frederic, informed of the restriction, could account for my silence; and, with the bright hopes and beautiful visions that filled my mind, three months seemed but a day in love's calculation.

Several weeks passed away, and I heard nothing relative to the all-absorbing object of my thoughts. What steps my father was taking to inquire into my lover's character I was entirely ignorant of. To me he never alluded to the subject, nor had I courage to speak of it. His manner was more than usually tender and affectionate, and I felt every confidence in his inclination to forward my happiness, and receive my lover as he deserved, when the term of his probation should expire.

One source of annoyance only did I experience at this time. Since the day on which I had spoken to him with such intemperate violence, my cousin Tom had never crossed our threshold. This vexed me; for, in a dim, imperfect sense, I was aware that, after his own fashion, Tom had a regard for me. His fault-finding arose from a habit of teasing, and was not the result of maliciousness of nature, for Tom's disposition was naturally kind and obliging. He was good to the poor and to the old: all servants liked him, and all animals knew him. It is painful to me to wound any one's feelings; and, though I could not say that I regretted my indignant outburst of scorn at his unmanly assertions relative to my lover, still I wished that they had been a little more feminine in expression and temperate in utterance. But I could not apologize to him; I still felt too angry at his wanton, reckless attack upon a man so much his superior. I regretted, however, the break I had occasioned with such a near relative, more especially on my father's account; for Tom was warmly attached to papa, who, from long habit, had got to rely upon his opinions, and lean upon him for companionship. If no quarrel had occurred, I should not have regretted Tom's absence on my own account, for neither in habits, manners, nor appearance did he suit my taste. There seemed to me to have been an antagonistic feeling between us from my infancy, and this last exhibition of it on his part had deepened indifference into dislike, and I would gladly have been relieved from the necessity of constant association with him. My father never alluded to Tom's absence; and, as no opportunity offered for me to say a conciliating word, I was too proud to make one.

About a month after my return, I was walking one evening in the grounds, some distance from the house, when I suddenly heard my name called. I started violently; for I knew the voice of my lover. The next instant he was before me, at my feet, with my hands clasped in his. My first word was one of reproach for having caused me to disobey my father. But when he broke forth into wild and impassioned language, and told me that he could not live denied the bliss of seeing me, I forgot my father and his injunctions, and suffered him to detain me while he poured out his love and his misery. It was wrong, I know; I should have left him immediately; but was it in human nature to fly from the expression of such a love? Then, too, he was thin and pale, and those beautiful, sad eyes of his looked sunken and sadder still. He told me that anxiety was impairing his health; and I saw that it was so. The paleness of his countenance, and the languor which subdued without impairing the beauty of his form, spoke volumes to my heart, and I sat down beside him upon the trunk of a felled tree, and listened to him without resistance. He told me that a letter from his father required his instant presence at home, on business of vital importance to his family. His father, he said, believed him to be married by this time, and urged his setting off with his bride immediately. He showed me the letter: it was fully as urgent as he described. The business was some lawsuit, which involved the fortunes of the whole family, and Fred's presence was necessary. The letter contained the most affectionate and flattering messages to me. How shall I describe what followed? My lover's errand was to persuade me to elope with him. He said it would be many months before he should be able to return; that his health, now impaired, would sink under the separation, if I bid him go alone. He said that my father *could* make

no reasonable objection at the end of the period assigned, and why not marry at once? His anger would be but short-lived, and would fade upon an absence of several months.

I resisted my lover; resisted him even when I felt that he was dearer to me than ever. And why? Because God had blessed me with a good mother, who had early instilled into my mind the difference between right and wrong, and who had planted in my heart, till it identified itself with my nature, a strong sense of womanly decorum. The idea of a clandestine marriage was opposed to all my ideas of feminine delicacy. To deceive and disobey my father would be both mean and sinful. Already had I gone contrary to his expressed command in meeting my lover, and the pain I was now enduring was the punishment of my disobedience. What were months, or even years, of separation compared with the remorse of a lifetime?

"No! I love you, Frederic," I said; "I will be faithful to you till death; but never ask me to forfeit my self-respect."

I left my lover abruptly, without turning, without pausing to listen to his last expostulations, and took refuge in my own room, determining not to wander again from the house till my father's prohibition was removed.

Time passed on; I heard nothing of my lover; I knew not where he was, or if my resistance to his wishes had offended him. My father preserved a profound silence regarding him, and the bright and hopeful dreams which had gilded my life for weeks past were replaced by anxiety and dejection of spirits.

More than two of the three months had gone by, when, one day, to my surprise, I saw from my chamber window my cousin Tom walking up the avenue to the house. A change had taken place in Tom's appearance, which I could not at first unravel; he had a great deal of hair on his face, and looked darker in complexion than when I had seen him last. I wondered if he had forgiven me, and would ask for me, and expected momentarily to be sent for; but I was disappointed. At the end of two hours I saw him leave the house; and, in a few minutes, I heard my father's footsteps approaching, and then his knock at my room door.

I will put in as few words as possible the communication which he came to make. He said that my cousin Tom, from the first, was so convinced of the unprincipled character of Frederic Flemming, that he shrank with dread from my marrying him; that, when shown the letter of Governor Flemming, which had been inclosed to my father, he pronounced it a forgery, saying that, at college, he had been remarkable for his wonderful power of imitating writing. The only way to decide this and every other point was to apply to Governor Flemming in person; and this Tom decided to do. He set off immediately on that long and fatiguing journey, saw Governor Flemming, and opened his errand to him without reserve, showing him the letter which purported to come from him. With much emotion, Governor Flemming informed my cousin that his son was a young man wholly lost to all principle, and that he had disinherited him several years before, in consequence of his dishonorable conduct. He said, with reference to the letter, that Tom's surmise was true; he had repeatedly forged his father's name, and involved him in painful difficulties. Governor Flemming expressed great sympathy for the lady and her family, who had become dupes of the plausible manners and winning appearance of this disgrace to his name; but added that he considered it his duty to advise Mr. Drayton to return immediately home and undeceive them, ere it was too late. He did so; and was the bearer of a sensible and feeling letter to my father from Governor Flemming.

I listened, with outward composure, to this narrative; yet every word of it fell like a knell upon my heart. Light, sunshine, hope seemed suddenly to die out within my soul. I felt as if a cold, dead weight had crushed me down, which I had no power to fling off. I had no thoughts, no power of reflection. In the numbness of every faculty, there remained but one vague, yearning wish—the desire to shut my eyes to this weary life, and find relief and rest upon my mother's bosom.

How long I remained thus I know not; but I was aroused by my father's voice, exclaiming—

"My child! my child! why do you gaze upon me thus? Do you not know me? It is your father!"

He grasped my shoulder and shook it, and I saw the big tears roll down his cheeks, for my eyes were still riveted upon his face. Suddenly, all consciousness left me, and I remember nothing for many days. When recollection returned, I found my father and Mammy Hetty leaning over my bed. My father's face was haggard and careworn; it seemed to me that twenty years could scarcely have effected so great a change. Even in this hour of bitter anguish, when, with returning consciousness, the memory of my sorrows filled my whole being, I was carried out of myself by this sad spectacle. This is all through me, I thought; and, for the first time, tears moistened my eyes. "I am better, dear papa," I said, stretching out my hand to him. He took my thin hand in his, bent over it an instant, and hastily left the room; but not before I had felt his hot tears rain down upon it.

Some days elapsed, and my progress towards recovery was so slow as scarcely to be noticed. The spring of my mind appeared broken. The shock which I had received still vibrated in my soul, and I had no power to lift myself up from the dust and ashes of my lost happiness. I had no wants, no wishes. They moved me from my bed to an easy-chair, and I sat up as long as I was directed to do so. I took the nourishment they offered me, and obediently swallowed every nauseous dose. It mattered little what they did with me, provided they did not require me to speak.

But one thing aroused me from this dull stupor of the mind—my father's presence. When he visited me, his pale, altered countenance, his anxious expression awoke the single chord that answered to human touch. I tried to be cheerful for his sake, I strove to talk; and, when I could not speak, my caresses told him that his daughter's love for him was unchanged. My little brothers I could not bear in my room. Their bright faces, their noisy habits, and their unguarded questions, made me shrink from their presence. I still loved them dearly; but I had no communion with their bright and happy natures.

Amid all this mental misery, there was nothing which I now feel ashamed to look back and dwell upon. No weak recurrence to the past, no lamentations over the unworthy. From the moment I became aware of my former lover's true character, I shrank from his image with strong repugnance. Memory never clothed him in the delusive colors of a bygone period. I saw him always as he was, a degraded, dishonored man—an impostor. And this it was that barbed the arrow which lay quivering in my heart. Had he been a worthier man, I could have borne it better; but to have yielded up the whole treasure of my affections upon such a shrine!—oh, what was there to console, to support me under such a calamity? I could have moved along my appointed path in life cheerfully, with the memory of a dead lover in my heart, calmly looking forward to a reunion beyond the grave. But with an unworthy one!—alas, what was I to do with the weight of wasted affection thrown back upon me? Nothing, that I could see, but bend under it and let it crush me.

Time went by, and I still continued in this state, when, one morning, my aunt Spenser unexpectedly entered my room. She was much moved on seeing me; but evidently endeavored to suppress her feelings. After conversing with me some time, doing all that her kind nature prompted to prepare my mind, she told me that she had come to tell me something unpleasant. Then, in a few words, she informed me that, for some time past, my father's affairs had been in a most critical situation. The ruin which he had been endeavoring to ward off had at length fallen upon him; his whole fortune was swept away; the roof over his head was no longer his own. Out of all his vast possessions he owned not a single dollar.

My mind, at that moment, did not fully grasp the extent of this calamity. Reared in the lap of luxury and indulgence, how could it? But I felt that sorrows had come upon my father, and the wish—the first I had had for many a weary day—arose within me to go to him and be his comforter. I prepared to go to him; but my aunt held me back, and I saw by her face that I had not heard all. Suspicion once aroused, I was peremptory in my demand to know the worst; and I soon learned that my father, overwhelmed by his misfortunes, had suffered a slight paralytic attack, and was ill in bed. No human power could now keep me from him: I went to him directly. Feeble as I was, I saw it comforted him to have me near him; and every moment which my own debilitated state allowed me to be up, was spent by his bedside.

I was sitting, one morning, during this anxious period, in a large chair in my father's dressing-room, waiting till he was ready to see me, when the door opened and my cousin Tom entered the room. He started back when he saw me; but, the next moment, approached and held out his hand. Weakened and unstrung as I was, his sudden entrance sensibly disturbed my composure; but I forgot myself in my surprise at the emotion which he betrayed. His whole countenance, as he gazed upon me, worked with strong agitation. Another instant, and he dropped my hand, and walked to a distant window, where he remained some time in silence. When he rejoined me, his face bore the marks of suppressed feeling. He sat down beside me, and, in an unsteady voice, said—

"Excuse me, Ellen; I did not know you had been so ill. I was not prepared to find you so—so changed."

"Changed, cousin?" I replied, with a sad smile. "Yes, I am greatly changed; but in no respect more so than in my estimate of your friendship. I have heartfelt thanks to render you, cousin, and a humble apology."

He pressed the fleshless hand which I laid in his, and said something, in a low, husky voice, about the idleness of dwelling upon the past, and then asked me some commonplace question about my father.

I had not been without agitation myself in this interview; and, glad to escape from any further trial in my feeble state, I gladly followed his example, and we spoke of my father till summoned to his room.

This first painful interview over, I was soon able to meet my cousin with composure, and with a very different estimate of his character from what I had before entertained. His presence was no longer a restraint to me, and I listened with respect to the opinions he advanced, and the advice which he gave my father in his present difficulties.

A fortnight elapsed before my father became convalescent; and, ere that time arrived, I had learned to appreciate, to the full extent, our misfortune. As soon as he was able to be removed, we must seek another home; and already had I talked our future plans over with him. The necessity for exertion had dispelled the dull lethargy of my mind. I now felt that I had sacred duties to perform, powerful efforts to make. I must live for others—must no longer think of myself. It is astonishing how steadily I looked reality in the face!—how rapidly I took in all the various points of our position, and sought for remedies! Our only means of support must henceforth be the rent of a house in town, which had been left me by my grandfather, and which yielded a thousand dollars a year. This would

enable us to live with frugality in a humble dwelling; while, to defray the expense of my brothers' education. I proposed to undertake a little school.

This was my plan; but, to my regret, it was not carried out in all its points. My father called in another counselor, in the person of my cousin Tom, who, as usual, had everything his own way. A comfortable little cottage belonging to Tom, some distance from the village, and nearer to his residence than to "Maple Park," was, at a nominal rent, appointed for our residence; while, by some private arrangement, the provisions of which I was not made acquainted with, my cousin was to be responsible for the education of the boys when they should be old enough to leave home; the school in the village, to which they now went, not being beyond our present means.

Severe as had been the stroke which involved the total loss of his fortune, my father suffered little from it, in comparison with what he had endured in his anxiety for me. His child again restored to him, each day increasing in strength and cheerfulness, repaid him for every other loss. Unambitious and simple in his habits, he had no regrets in the loss of fortune, save for me. To see me deprived of the comforts, the luxuries to which I had been accustomed, grieved him sorely. He had witnessed my enjoyment of the dazzling pleasures which his wealth and the social position of our family had surrounded me, and he feared the effects of the change upon my happiness. Ah, how little, at that time, did he understand me! how little appreciate the revolution which had taken place in my character! A whirlwind had swept over my mind. The future, which ardent girlhood had once painted in such brilliant colors, was now an arid desert. A new road lay before me, dull, prosaic, eventless, it is true, but it was the path of duty, along which I could safely move without fear of trap or pitfall; and on this I now pressed forward calmly, as the sole object of my life, shrinking, with painful and averted gaze, from all that had once made the charm of my existence; for, though that charm was broken, it had left its impress behind. I had lived upon divine draughts; I could not accept wormwood instead, and call it pleasant. Yet I was not unhappy. How could I be unhappy with such a cause for thankfulness in my heart? When I thought of my escape, I thanked God for being merciful to me—thanked him mid bitter tears, though they welled from a bruised heart and a poisoned memory.

Before my aunt Spenser concluded her visit, which was for the purpose of making the most kind and generous offers to us in our misfortunes, she gave me the last intelligence I received of Frederic Flemming. She said that, much to her surprise, he had called at her house the day she heard of my father's failure, and was unintentionally admitted. He came, he said, to make some inquiries for me. The three months of his probation, he added, would expire on the morrow, and it was his intention to present himself to my father and demand my hand My aunt told him, coldly, that, from all she could learn, such a visit would prove most unacceptable, and intimated her desire to end the interview. But Flemming was not to be so easily repelled. He gave way to the most vehement expressions, appealed to my aunt, reproached her for having listened to his enemies—for deserting him. He vowed, in the strongest language, that existence, without me, was unbearable; that, if I would not live for him, he would die for me; and concluded by saying he should depart that very day for Litchfield, claim me as his wife, and beard my purse-proud father in his own home.

My aunt, aware, from this expression, that he was ignorant of my father's misfortunes, and, anxious to see the effect it would have upon him, asked him if he had not heard of the total ruin which had fallen upon my father? He started in extreme surprise, asked some questions closely to the point, and rose to go. My aunt said that a more changed being, in those few minutes, it was impossible to conceive. He made no inquiry for me, though my aunt spoke of my illness; all his questions regarded my father's loss of fortune. The next day, my uncle Spenser learned that he had left town in company with a profligate actress.

This was very bitter. Hitherto, my pride, my affections alone had suffered; now, my poor vanity was left without a single foothold. I believed that Flemming, unprincipled as he was, had loved me. I now saw that my expected wealth was my sole attraction, and that his whole conduct, from the first, had been a deep-laid plan to enrich himself at my expense.

We removed to our cottage. My father's creditors, pleased with his honorable course towards them, insisted upon his taking his books, furniture, and plate. Of these, we selected what we required, and our new home welcomed us with a familiar aspect.

My health and strength now returned rapidly. I had no time to dwell hurtfully upon past sorrows; every hour was too fully occupied. If the light laugh and bounding step were gone from me forever, I had, in their place, grateful smiles and an alacrity of will that smoothed over all the rough places of our changed lot, and made my father's home a little shrine of happiness to him. How often would he draw me to his side, and, smoothing down my hair and cheek, call me his pride, his darling, the stay and comfort of his old age! Was I not, then, repaid for every sacrifice of self to duty? I was, an hundredfold!

My cousin Tom, during all this period, was our constant counselor and friend. He personally exercised, in our behalf, the mechanical powers of several tradesmen, hammering, and tinkering, and gluing, and putting the finishing touches to many a nameless comfort, which the carpenter, painter, and upholsterer had no skill to reach. My father could not drive a nail, or hang a picture, unless

Tom was present to approve. My little brothers followed him about with endless wants, and even our maid of all work called upon him, in his capacity of landlord, to amend any evils which existed in her dominion, the kitchen.

And how did I like all this intimacy? is the next question. Very well, reader. I now felt the comfort of having a practical friend; and I made many demands upon Tom's services myself. A little reserve there was between us, 'tis true, but more on his side than on mine. I felt that I owed Tom a deep obligation; and mine was not a nature to feel gratitude a burthen. I had buried, with the past, all recollection of my ancient feud with him. Whether he still recollected it, it was impossible for me to say. That his interference in my behalf had been actuated by the purest motives, I did not now doubt, and that he felt sincerely for my broken health and wounded spirit, was equally clear. The favorable change in my opinion of my cousin was confirmed by my sense of the delicacy of his conduct since my great trial. His deportment was entirely changed. There was no lightness and flippancy of speech now, but, in their place, grave and respectful attention. He never called me Nelly, never teased, quizzed, or provoked me. He was guarded always in his conversation, as if fearful of touching upon some painful topic, and I did not fail to notice that, with quiet unobtrusiveness, he was watchful over my health and assiduous for my comfort. That I relished my cousin Tom's society, as yet, with the same zest that my father did, I cannot affirm; but he was never in my way, and I had now frequent occasion, in the manifold duties that devolved upon me, to call upon him for advice and assistance in matters about which I did not choose to trouble my father.

Our way of life soon became settled; I had plenty to do, so we rose early. After breakfast, Tom always dropped in with the newspapers for my father. If the weather was fine, he stopped and chatted, whilst I, towel in hand, washed and wiped the breakfast cups. If bad, he came in his gig and took the boys to school, and, in his morning walks or drives, executed whatever commissions we could be induced to trouble him with. My mornings were taken up with household duties or home employments, the afternoons were chiefly devoted to my exercise, which my father was very careful to exact, and our evenings were passed round the table by our genial fireside. My father and Tom, for he was our nightly visitor, reading aloud or chatting, the boys learning their lessons till bedtime, and incessantly calling upon "Cousin Tom," who was their constant referee on all occasions, for assistance in their various dilemmas, whilst I sewed industriously, or occasionally, to please my father, gave them a little music.

The spring brought with it new pleasures and employments. Tom sent his gardener and laborers to put our little place in order, and it was soon brilliant in bloom and beauty. Tom possessed great skill in grafting, and we, in a little while, exhibited wonders in this branch of horticulture. My taste craved an endless variety of flowers. My brothers, with an eye to their palates, demanded a little strawberry bed, "all to themselves," both of which fancies were gratified by our kind cousin. While we weeded, planted, dug, and grafted, my father, basking in the sun under our vine-covered piazza, read his newspapers and enjoyed our happiness in these simple pleasures.

The spring also brought another source of comfort to my father. My strength and bloom returned, and the haunting fears which he had harbored respecting me vanished. I was still too sober—sad, he called it—to please him; and, if he heard a happy tone or a light laugh from me, he was brighter for the rest of the day.

My aunt Spenser and her family were full of kind and delicate attentions to us in our adversity. They visited us frequently, and my aunt and cousins were anxious that I should spend some time with them. My father, too, urged it; but when he saw me shrink from the proposal with pain, he said no more. How little they understood me! Even if no secret repugnance to mixing again in the world had influenced me, I could not have deprived my father of the solace which my society was to him. I could not myself, under our circumstances, have borne to be separated from him.

The peaceful, quiet pursuits of domestic life afford few points of interest save to the actors in them. It was so with us. A year rolled by, leaving but little to record. By the beginning of the second spring after my father's failure, things began to brighten for us again. Every debt was paid; and, to add to our cheerfulness, some coal lands, which had heretofore been considered worthless, and no account taken of them, proved to be of great and increasing value, so that, in a few years, a considerable income might be expected from them.

This was an inexpressible relief to my father's mind, taking from it a weight of anxiety concerning the future welfare of his children. Edward and Willy could now be educated as he wished, without stint, and his dear daughter no longer be drained of her little pittance.

I rejoiced with my father, and I also rejoiced on my own account; for at no period of life are we indifferent to the prospect of increased means. I had now a thousand schemes prepared for the embellishment of our cottage home, to which we were all strongly attached, for increasing my father's comfort, and for furthering the boys' interests. It was a bright and happy spring to us all. I say all; for, though altered in character, I was no longer unhappy. It is true, I never looked to the future, built no castles in the air for myself; but I had so much to do for other people, so much to think of, that I had no time to dwell upon the past.

During this interval of time, I had been once to town, to attend the wedding of my cousin Julia. The visit was short; for I felt no renewal of my

former tastes, and I was anxious to return to my father and the home where I was so indispensable. My cousin Fanny was our frequent visitor, and, during the warm months, she spent a good deal of time with us. She was an amiable, light-hearted, merry girl, and assimilated with us all—handsome enough to suit my father's taste, who liked a face that was fair to look at; merry enough to suit the boys, who enjoyed a romp; and a pleasant companion to me in many of my pursuits. My cousin Tom, too, liked her, which was, for Tom, saying a good deal, as he had no fancy for my aunt Spenser or her family. I always believed that Tom blamed my aunt for a want of prudent circumspection in that most painful episode of my life. Be this as it may, he never seemed to remember to Fanny's discredit that she was her mother's daughter.

Tom was the only exception in the general cheerfulness of our little circle. He was evidently out of health this spring. My father did not appear to see it, though he remarked, and often complained of his frequent absence. I noticed more than this: he looked badly, and was dull and moody in spirits. Ordinarily, he was a great talker; now, he would often sit through a whole evening, merely answering the questions addressed to him.

The boys, who seemed to consider Cousin Tom as an exclusive possession of their own, often held counsel together and commented upon his "crossness," evidently considering themselves ill used.

When Fanny came in June, she noticed the change, and taxed him with it. Tom replied he was well, and, as usual, in a tone that put down further inquiry, and resumed his old habits, coming over every morning to work with us in the garden, and spending most of his evenings with us.

I now observed that Tom was particularly cool to *me*. At first, I thought it must be my imagination; but I soon became convinced that it was really the case. He avoided me decidedly, and, while with us, gave all his attention to Fanny. I had been so long a first object with all my family, that this dereliction of Tom's gave my vanity a severer pang than I had thought myself capable of. My pride, however, soon came to my relief; and, as I knew that I had done nothing to offend Tom, I drew back in turn, and left him to his own waywardness. Still there was no improvement, but rather the reverse; he was now often fretful, irritable, and capricious, and would frequently leave us abruptly, as if ashamed of having given way to such exhibitions of temper.

One balmy midsummer morning, after breakfast, Fanny and I were seated in the piazza with our work, when we were joined by Tom with a newspaper in his hand. As was often the case now, he appeared disposed to enjoy it by himself, and we sat in silence for some time. The silence was broken by my little brothers, who were at play in the garden, running up and entreating Tom to come and look at a hornet's nest which they had discovered. But Tom was not in an indulgent mood this morning, and shook them off with a dry negative.

"How cross Cousin Tom always is now!" said little Willy, dejectedly. "He never comes any more when we want him I wonder what's the matter with him!"

"I know! I know!" said Edward, flippantly, prepared to launch his arrow and fly. "Mammy Hetty told me: she knows. He 's in love!"

I looked up from my work, when, to my surprise, I beheld my cousin Tom's countenance covered with the deepest confusion. I glanced at Fanny; her face was crimson, and she averted her countenance to conceal her blushes.

A strange, a startling suspicion presented itself to my mind, and, with the quickness of thought, it was received and adopted. Then came a singular tumult within me. There was a singing in my ears, a dimness in my sight, a quickening of the pulses, and an utterly confused and tangled state of mind and feeling, which kept me for some instants motionless in my chair. When I recovered the mastery of my mind, which was not without a violent effort, I again lifted my eyes; Tom had resumed his newspaper, and Fanny was leaving the piazza with Willy. I arose and went up to my room, shut and locked the door. Then, and not till then, did I allow thought to have its way—feeling to reign. I paced the floor; I covered my burning face with my hands; I resisted, struggled with, fought back the shameful conviction; but still it returned with resistless force. A voice, which would not be stifled, cried aloud, "He loves your cousin Fanny, and you—you love him!" But pride came to my aid, and said, "Why suffer this demon to taunt you with its lies? Strangle it; cast it out, and set your foot upon its throat." I obeyed; and conviction lay powerless beneath my iron will. I allowed no voice to be heard but the voice of pride. To love unsought, to love the lover of Fanny, to feel a pang that she was preferred, was a humiliation I could not endure. I would not pause to ask how it had all come about. I shut myself rigidly out from all self-examination. I only said it shall be no longer.

How long this whirlwind of passionate emotion lasted I know not. I was recalled to my senses by a glimpse of my haggard face in the glass. I seized my bonnet, and, stealing down the kitchen stairs, made my way into the road. I walked resolutely to the village, made some necessary purchases, and after an absence of several hours, returned just in time for dinner, with a severe headache. A gentle chiding from my father, and a most welcome banishment to the sofa for the rest of the evening, were the result.

"Ellen has been walking in the hot sun till she has brought on a violent headache," said my father as Tom entered the room at dusk. "I hope she may not have made herself ill by it."

"How far did you go, Ellen?" asked Tom

"Only to Litchfield."

"To Litchfield! Much too long and unsheltered a walk in the sun of such a day as this," he replied.

When tea was brought in, I asked Fanny to pour it out, and kept my recumbent posture upon the sofa.

"A little tea will do you good," said papa.

I could not take anything, and so declined; but Tom arose from his place, and, bringing me a cup of tea, said, in the quiet, authoritative manner so peculiar to him—

"Drink it, Ellen; it will do you good."

I raised my pallid face and took the cup; I had no power to resist; but, as I put it to my lips, the tears, which I could not choke down, fell from my eyes and dropped into it. I put it aside, motioned Tom away, and, sinking back upon the pillows, covered my face with my shawl. Tom made no comments, and returned to the table.

After tea the boys gathered round the table with their books and drawings. Fanny took her work, and my father his newspaper.

"Oh, what a funny picture, Cousin Tom! Let me see it," exclaimed the boys.

"No, I must show it to Ellen first, as she is an invalid."

Tom approached me; but, instead of showing me a drawing, he held up a paper, upon which was written, "Is anything the matter that I can aid you in?"

"No," I replied, impatiently; "I only want to be let alone."

The following day or two I pleaded indisposition. I could not entirely subdue all outward manifestations of the hurried workings of my mind, and I was glad to conceal, beneath the mask of bodily sickness, the disorder of my feelings. My walk in the sun, and its consequent headache, naturally confirmed this assertion, and my silence and desire for solitude were accounted for.

The first strong feelings of surprise and emotion over, I became composed. I had sounded the depths of my mind, and the result was before me. In my early youth, as the reader knows, my cousin was my aversion. Then came a time when deep sorrow befell me: a gulf yawned at my feet, and Tom's arresting hand held me back. I awoke from a terrible delusion, chastened, yet most grateful, and filled with remorse for my past blindness to my cousin's worth. "From many sorrows cometh wisdom." I had passed through the fiery baptism, and beheld sense, feeling, and integrity where I had once only seen repulsive roughness and vain assumption. In the priceless service which Tom had rendered me, in the prompt and efficient aid he had afforded us in our misfortunes, in the affectionate interest with which he had devoted himself to my father, to us all, in our reverses, I had witnesses in the kindness of his nature, the uprightness of his principles, and the powerful good sense which controlled all. This was not a character to appreciate and remain indifferent to. I saw my cousin daily; he was my constant associate, adviser, friend; every pleasure of my existence was brightened through his means, every annoyance smoothed away, till, insensibly, he grew to be a part of my scheme of life. Yet to love—to love again, was a thought that never presented itself to me. I shrunk whenever I heard marriage discussed, so bitter had been my experience. Had I asked myself what I desired for the future, I should have said, "Nothing, but to live on as we do now, with my father's health continued, my brothers growing up in goodness, and my cousin Tom near, and devoting all his time to us."

These were the vague and undefined ideas that, as I unraveled my feelings, I found had occupied my mind. I had taken no account, it seems, of what might be Tom's views of happiness. In my blindness and selfishness, I had thought him as contented as myself. Suddenly, and without any preparation, I was awakened from my dream—bitterly awakened—for the moment that betrayed to me his secret revealed my own. I saw that he loved Fanny, at the instant when the conviction dawned upon me that he was dearer to me than life.

My course now was plain before me. I must struggle with and overcome this new affliction—an affliction only less terrible than the former, because it was unaccompanied by shame and humiliation. My pride at least would be saved, and that to me was a powerful object. I could better wrestle with unsuspected sorrow than with a grief laid bare and quivering to the world.

And how did I feel towards Fanny? Did I hate her for supplanting me? Did I dislike her because she had become the dearest thing in life to the being in whose eyes I had always believed myself first? No, I did not hate her; but I had an eager, haunting wish that she would go away. I could not bear to see them perpetually before me. I knew it would go on; I knew he would marry her; but why must I be witness of the progress of their love? Every word he spoke to her, every look he gave, fell upon my irritated mind like a sharp arrow. From my window I saw them together in the garden; from every corner of the house I heard Tom's pleasant voice and Fanny's ever ready laugh. I saw them walk together, evidently happy in their endless talk, and all this was lively torture to me. Some day, I must see her become his wife; but not now—not now! I must have time.

Luckily for me, my wish was unexpectedly gratified. Fanny received a summons home, and she left us without delay. We parted now, as we had never done before, with a cloud of reserve and embarrassment between us.

"God bless you, dear Ellen!" said Fanny, as she retraced her steps and gave me one more parting kiss. "When next we meet, you will be well again, and I—I shall, I hope, be very happy."

It needed not the blushing cheek, nor the faltering voice to explain the mystery of these words to me. I saw it all. And how could it be otherwise. I

thought, with a sigh, as the door closed upon her, thrown together as they were? Alas! it was all natural enough, yet I found no solace in the conviction.

I tried to frame a plan of life to myself for the future; but, to cast my thoughts forward, I found was intolerable anguish. How should I be able to carry on life without my cousin, woven as he was in the pursuits of every day? Who was to be my daily companion, adviser, friend? Who now would bring me books, flowers, music? Who would accompany me in my walks, direct my reading, and take interest in my occupations? No answer came from my purposeless mind.

The day after Fanny left us I sat alone in our little parlor. My father and the boys were enjoying the coolness of approaching twilight in the garden. My reverie was broken by the sound of coming footsteps, and my throbbing pulses betrayed whose step it was. Tom entered the room, and, seeing me, approached and inquired how I was.

"Much better," was the reply, in a voice of forced steadiness. "I shall soon be well."

"What will you say," rejoined Tom, "if I tell you that you have not been sick at all? I know you too well, Ellen," he continued, firmly, "to be deceived. It is your mind that suffers, not your body. You have heard some painful intelligence—received some sudden shock! Tell me what it is. Relieve your mind by unburthening it. I may, perhaps, be able to aid, to comfort you. Is it," he said, hesitatingly, seeing me moved—"is it—anything about—about Flemming?"

I turned away my face, relieved from a load of apprehension, and answered, calmly—

"You are mistaken: I know nothing of Mr. Flemming; and the time is long passed since anything connected with him could affect me."

Tom sat silently for some time, his hand shading his eyes. At length he looked up, and said—

"Ellen, will you allow me to speak to you of the past, to mention something that weighs upon my mind?"

I assented.

"You have often," he continued, "thanked me and expressed your gratitude for the steps which I took in that business of Flemming's. Few men like to take credit that does not belong to them, and I least of all. I have not deserved the thanks which you bestowed upon me, for my motives were not so disinterested as you suppose."

"Whatever your motives were, cousin, I am sure they were good. I have benefited too much by them not to think them so."

"I see you are determined not to ask me what they were, Ellen; but I shall not mind that. I mean to tell them to you in plain, unvarnished English. I am in a mood to say strange things this evening—reckless, perhaps, you will call it. I loved you then myself, Ellen. I did not know it till that man addressed you. If he had been worthy of you, God alone knows what I should have done. As it happened, duty and feeling both pointed out the path I took. You look surprised: I am not astonished. I don't wonder that you stare at me with that look of breathless amazement. You never suspected it. No; I have always been very careful of your feelings; and, if I give you pain now, bear with me for a little space, for it is the first time I ever did so consciously. You may think me selfish; perhaps I am. One thing I am certain of, I am very miserable. To love unloved is a bitter thing to a nature like mine. To love a woman whose affections are exhausted, whose thoughts are devoted to the memory of a false idol and a broken dream, is more than bitter—'tis humiliating!"

Agitated and strangely joyful as I was, at that moment I could not think of myself. Tom's voice, modulated by the strong feeling that bore him resistlessly on, penetrated every fibre of my frame. I could not speak, yet I yearned to give him comfort. I turned to him and laid my hand upon his arm. He took my hand in both his own, and pressed it convulsively.

"Do you know, Ellen," he said, impetuously, "that there have been moments of my life when I could have welcomed any calamity that would have thrown you into my arms? Nay, I could have purchased you with money, and chained you to my side an unwilling bride, exulting, with savage joy, that you could belong to no one else, content to be miserable so you were near me, and dreaming sometimes, in my moments of madness, that, out of the boundless wealth of my own love, I could kindle affection in you. This was insanity: I know it! In my sane moments, I am the last man on earth who would accept a hand without a heart. What do you think of me, Ellen? You will think meanly of me after this confession of weakness. Yet I am glad that I have told you all. It is a relief to me; and now I shall carry out some settled plan of life with a lighter heart. I shall travel, go abroad, brace my soul by change of scene, and, if I return, do so with this weakness shaken off."

I am afraid I shall forfeit your good opinion, reader; I fear it was unmaidenly; but what could I do? I had no voice; it was lost in the storm of emotion that shook my whole frame. I did what seemed to me very natural then; I put my arms round my cousin Tom's neck, and, hiding my face upon his shoulder, cried heartily.

We mortals are ungrateful creatures! If a cloudy day comes to mar a plan, or a rainy night to spoil a pleasure, how we rail! If the complainant be of the softer sex, according to the bad taste of the times, she will call it "horrid!" "abominable!" "shocking!" and, if her brain be very barren, "awful" weather; but when the sun smiles upon us in our pleasures, and the soft breezes minister to our schemes, we never say, "How pleasant is the day!" "How thankful I am for this favor!" "God is very good to us!" No; we receive it as our due, as a matter of course, and the heart offers up no incense. On the present occasion, however, I

was not liable to this charge. I was very thankful for the unclouded night that stole insensibly upon us. The moon rose in brilliant beauty, the stars came out and lent their aid to illuminate the world, and my father found so much to tell the boys about the eternal lights, with their heathen names, that it was long before they thought of returning to the house. When they did come, my tears had long been dried away, and Tom had arrived at some degree of rational composure.—It is astonishing how happiness agreed with him, and how saucy he soon became!

It was long past the boys' bedtime, so I hurried them off, and went with them myself, leaving Tom to inform my father of his modest desire to rob him of his daughter. I had little fear of the result of the application, however. My father loved Tom as his own son, and, when he came to my room ere he slept, and pressed me to his bosom and blessed me, I knew that the dearest wish of his heart was gratified.

You, no doubt, reader, have suspected long since what broke upon me with such startling surprise—the conviction of my cousin Tom's attachment to me, and its result.

With a mind naturally tenacious and constant, I had, with the presumption of youth, taken no account of its buoyancy and disposition to be comforted. I had mentally concluded that my race was run: a fiery hand had been laid upon my heart, and withered it forevermore. My surprise, my torn and agitated feelings, on finding that there had grown up in my heart a new passion, strong as death, with no drawback from reason, judgment, or prudence to stay its course, I have already recorded. But what shall I say of my amazement when I discovered that my cousin Tom had for years loved me?—that he loved me now with a passion as strong, as fervent as his own consistent, manly character? Indeed, I should find it difficult to describe the contending feelings that took possession of me. Fluttered, agitated as I was, I could grasp but one idea, and that was deep, abiding happiness.

And what had become of my jealousy of my cousin Fanny? Gone like the summer dew. But with it had not fled all uneasiness. I was mistaken about Tom; but I certainly could not be about her. She loved him; and what misery for her! what pain for me! It was a subject which I dared not speak upon to Tom. I once ventured to say to him that Fanny was not like herself when last with us; and he replied, carelessly—

"Yes; I observed it. Something is working in that little head of hers. We shall know what it is one day."

"Heaven forbid!" mentally ejaculated I.

A week after this came a note from Fanny, confirming Tom's conjecture, telling me that she was engaged to be married. Her parents had opposed her marriage, and sent her to us in a sort of banishment. Fanny had feared to tell me of it, she was pleased to say, because my dutiful conduct had always been held up to her as an example, and she had been very rebellious and disobedient. All was now smoothed over, however, and she invited me to her wedding.

"I thought it was something of the kind," said Tom, when I read him the note; "Fanny was so desperately sentimental; and you know, Nelly, there is nothing like a fellow-feeling to enlighten one's mind. I knew she was in love!"

"I suspected it myself," I replied, demurely; but I would not for the world have told him whom with.

And now, reader, my history is done. I have been married for some years to my cousin Tom, and I am truly blessed. My trials I have received as my portion of the sorrows which fall to the share of all human beings. My happiness I scarcely feel I deserve. If ever this humility is endangered by the flatteries of my husband, I recall it immediately by reflecting, with shame, upon the obtuseness of mind which rendered me incapable of appreciating the character of him whom I now consider superior in mind, manners, and attainments to any one I have ever known.

SERENADE.

BY JNO. B. DUFFEY.

Look forth, my love! This lonely hour
 I lingering watch by thee:
Look forth, nor fear; the summer shower
 Has hurried to the sea.
In solemn stillness glides the moon
 Adown her starry way;
The young, fresh leaves of early June
 From light to shadow play;
The fleecy clouds, like spirits bright,
 Haste o'er the midnight sky,
And rain-drops tremble in the light
 That falleth from on high.
Then look forth, maiden of my heart,
 I linger still by thee!
Look on the night—if minstrel art
 Can win no glance for me.

O listen, love! I linger still,
 Though hope is pale with fear;
I stay—for stronger than the will
 Is love that binds me here.
In yonder wood the sweet, sad moans
 Of infant winds are heard;
My heart is by the murmured tones
 Of far-off waters stirred:
Of some lone bird the fitful wail
 Falls mournful on my ear;
And on the hill-top, in the vale,
 Soft melodies I hear.
Then listen, love!—I cannot part,
 I know not why, from thee!
List to the night—if minstrel art
 Can bring no thought to me.

AUNT TABITHA'S FIRESIDE.

No. II.—PAUL'S IMPROMPTU.

BY EDITH WOODLEY.

"Did I ever tell you about my impromptu, Lizzie?" said Paul—"what trouble I had to get it done to my mind?"

"I don't remember that you ever did."

"Your impromptu!" said Aunt Tabitha. "What on the face of the airth is that? Some new-fangled coat or jacket, I 'll warrant. It 's on'y the other day, as it were, that you had what you called a serape. Now, if you 're so extravagant, Paul, I don't care how much trouble you have in gettin' things made to your mind. In my young days, if a boy, when he was out of his time, had a substantial straight-bodied coat made out of good homespun cloth, he thought himself well provided for, and didn't expect to have another under three or four year."

"I believe I am a little more extravagant than the young men used to be in the good old times; but I assure you, aunt, that the impromptu I spoke of has nothing to do with coats or jackets. It is nothing but a few lines of poetry."

"You don't mean to say that you ever undertook to make poetry out of your own head?"

"Yes, I did, aunt, make it out of my own head, and, thank my stars, without causing it any irreparable injury; though I had a tremendous headache for a fortnight afterward."

"I 'm glad of it. The evil might 'ave grown upon you, if it hadn't sarved you in the way it did. Accordin' to my way of thinkin', when a young man gets into a notion of making vairses, singin' songs, and fiddlin' and dancin', he 's a poor critter; and, if I was a gal, I wouldn't have him for a husband a bit sooner than I'd cut one of my fingers off."

"And you would serve him exactly right," said Paul.

"Come," said Lizzie, "what about your impromptu?"

"The summer before I entered college I was at a pic-nic. Among the gentlemen present, there was one Jonathan Bagshaw, who often figured in the 'Poet's Corner' of the 'Village Journal,' over the signature of 'Philander.' His poetry was of the high pressure, sentimental style, which made him exceedingly popular among the girls, especially that part who had just entered their teens. For this reason, I confess that I envied him not a little. At the pic-nic, he kept apart from the rest, and I noticed that he looked into every nook and corner he came to, as if in search of something; while, occasionally, he would come to a sudden stand, cast his eyes upwards, lay his hand upon his heart, and move his lips as if he were addressing something he saw up in the sky. The girls narrowly watched his movements, and would at such times exclaim—

"'Oh, how inspired he looks! He 's composing some of his sweet poetry now, I know. Doesn't he look angelic?'

"Miranda Brown, a girl with large black eyes, a profusion of raven hair, and remarkably white teeth, gave it as her opinion that the 'divine Philander beat Shakspeare and Milton, as well as the more modern poets, all to nothing; and that whoever he might choose for his lady-love would be the most enviable woman alive, as her name, embalmed in his immortal verse, would descend to the latest posterity.'

"Now, as I was most violently enamored of Miss Miranda, and imagined that she regarded *me* with some degree of favor, I considered this speech as very unkind; more especially as I had, not five minutes before, wet my feet in attempting to find a cranberry-bed, the location of which she was particularly anxious to ascertain."

"Jest good enough for you," said Aunt Tabitha, "if you were sich a simpleton as to think you must wade ankle deep into the swamp to spy out a cramb'ry-bed for Randy Brown. I 've heern of Randy hundreds of times; she pretends to be terrible genteel; but I can tell you, Paul, that there 's a deal of truth in the old proverb that says, gentility without ability is like puddin' without salt."

"Wetting my feet wasn't all the bad luck I met with, aunt. After I had explored the swamp, by trying to penetrate a thicket, where she was sure that there were plenty of wild gooseberries, I nearly tore one of the skirts of my coat off."

"Well, if that don't beat all! If Randy hadn't 'ave thought that you were a great goose, she never would asked you to dive in among a mess of briers and thorns for the sake of a handful of green gooseberries."

"I can't say what Miranda thought about my being a goose; but, for myself, I soon began to suspect that I might, without greatly underrating the keenness of my intellect, be placed on a par with that sagacious biped; for, having emerged from the thicket, I was hastening towards Miranda with the nearly dismembered skirt of my coat flapping to the breeze like a torn banner, when I saw Mr. Jonathan Bagshaw approaching her in an opposite direction, with a single violet between his thumb and finger. From that moment, I saw that Miranda

had no eyes except for him. When he had advanced within a few steps of her, he stopped, and, assuming an attitude exactly similar to what I had seen him several times during the morning, he repeated these lines—

"'Accept, sweet girl, this violet,
And wear it in your raven hair,
And with it twined, Miranda, let
Kind thoughts of me lie nestling there.'"

"Well, if that ain't weaker than dish-water," said Aunt Tabitha. "A tarnal fool—how did he expect that she was goin' to twist her thoughts up with a vi'let, and then keep 'em lodged up amongst her hair like a crow's nest in a pine tree? If I 'd set out to make a vairse of po'try, I 'd 'ave contrived to gi'n it a leetle sprinklin' of sense, I know, jest to 'ave kept it from spilin'."

"I didn't know, aunt, that you were such a severe critic. The girls, who had gathered round to hear it, thought it first rate.

"'Why, Mr. Bagshaw, is that some of your own composition?' said one.

"'When did you write it?' said another.

"'How sweet!' exclaimed a third.

"'What an affecting appeal to a sensitive heart!' was the remark of a fourth.

"'You have not told us when you wrote it,' said a fifth.

"'It was never written,' replied Jonathan. 'Just at the moment I commenced reciting it, it emanated from my heart of hearts. In a word, ladies, it was an impromptu.'

"'Oh, everything,' exclaimed Miranda, 'which passes through the alembic of Philander's mind turns to gold. Philander, I accept the violet, and shall ever consider it as a flower consecrated by genius—one that has been bathed in the sparkling waters which flow from the heights of Helicon."

"The admiration of all present was redoubled when told that it was an impromptu. I will not undertake to describe the envy with which I regarded Mr. Jonathan Bagshaw; but, after I had had time for reflection, I felt determined that I, too, would write an impromptu. Now, although this is a contradiction of terms, I shrewdly suspect that a great part of the impromptus—so called—cost their several authors not a little beating of the brains, and that the occasion is more frequently made for the impromptu than the impromptu for the occasion.

"The night succeeding the pic-nic, the moon being nearly at the full, was almost as light as day; and, retiring to my chamber at an early hour, I determined that I would at once set about composing my impromptu. I walked the floor awhile, seeking inspiration, but it would not come. I looked out of the window with the like success. At last, I went out and walked in the garden, hoping that it would be poured down upon me from the moon. Raising my eyes in the fashion I saw Mr. Jonathan Bagshaw, when he was hunting for the violet, I exclaimed, aloud—

"Oh, silver Luna, gently rolling through—

There I came to a dead stand. Rolling through what? That was the question. Should it be through the sapphire sky, the azure heavens, or ethereal space? A word must also be found to rhyme with *through*. As ill luck would have it, being a little thirsty, it happened to pop into my mind that I should like a good draught of your nice spruce beer, Aunt Tabitha, after which, for a long time, though I rejected the idea of Miranda being engaged in brewing beer with the utmost disdain, the word *brew* was the only one I could think of. At last, after for a full half hour it had haunted me, like an evil spirit, I succeeded in exorcising it. Quite a number of words rose up in its stead, and, among the rest, *shoe*; but this I soon cast aside, for I recollected that Miranda's foot, even if subjected to the most careful paring process, could not be compressed within the limits of a Cinderella slipper, the only kind which I supposed would bear to be introduced into poetry. In an agony of doubt as to which of the words which now came crowding into my mind would be most feasible, I walked up and down the gravel path with rapid strides: 'I have it!' said I, suddenly coming to a stand, and I repeated—

"'Oh, silver Luna, gently rolling through
The sapphire sky, thy vot'ry thee doth woo'—

"I could get no further; the garden seemed too circumscribed to admit the full expansion of my ideas. A change of scene I therefore thought might prove propitious, and I jumped over the fence into an adjoining enclosure. I appeared to have more freedom now, and sparkling eyes, starry skies, sweet ruby lips, and rosy finger tips, teeth like pearls, and night-black curls, Cupid's darts, and bleeding hearts, were all floating before me in one chaotic mass. Wholly absorbed in endeavoring to decide which of these phrases I had best first press into my service, I entirely forgot that there was a frog-pond in the centre of the inclosure, and, as I proceeded with upraised eyes, the first thing I knew I stepped into it. The frogs that, long ere this, had hushed their nightly songs, were roused by this sudden splashing of their favorite element, and at once burst into full chorus, which sounded to me as if they said, 'Trip him up! trip him up!' to which would now and then be added a deep, gruff bass voice, saying, 'Souse him well! souse him well!' Altogether, the scene appeared to me so ludicrous that, vexed as I was, I could not restrain a hearty laugh."

"I wish to massy you had fell in and wet yourself all over; if you had, it might 'ave brought you to your senses. Why, you were in a fair way to make a nateral fool of yourself. That was the second time in twenty-four hours that you wet your feet, 'cause you 'd got your head so full of Randy Brown. I wonder, for my part, that you hadn't kitcht your death a-cold. If I 'd had you under my

thumb a week, I 'll warrant you, I 'd 'ave dosed you with hot airb-drink till you 'd come to yourself, and knowed what you were about."

"It would have been serving me about right, I think," said Paul.

"Did you ever finish your impromptu?" inquired Lizzie.

"O yes; though my cold foot-bath so damped my poetic fervor, I could proceed no further that night. The next day was Wednesday, and, early in the morning, I received an invitation to attend a party on Thursday evening at Mr. Brown's. I resolved that my impromptu should be ready for the occasion. The experience of the preceding night having taught me that it was not safe to trust myself to a free range out of doors, when the poetic frenzy was upon me, I shut myself into my chamber and worked all the morning harder than a day-laborer, trying to reduce to order the chaos of phrases of which I have given a catalogue. I scarcely allowed myself time to eat during the whole day, and the midnight lamp found me undecided as to whether I had better make skies or sighs rhyme with eyes. I, however, before I slept, succeeded in disposing of each of the phrases; as, in my opinion, there was not one among the whole which was not too precious to be lost. I cannot now recollect how I arranged them, though I remember that I was extremely well satisfied with them as a whole. I entertained not the least doubt that I should achieve a decided victory over Mr. Jonathan Bagshaw; for, while his impromptu contained only four lines, mine consisted of more than a dozen. As I had so composed it that I must present Miss Miranda with a rose when I repeated it, I took care before going to the party to secure one in a buttonhole of my vest. When I arrived, Mr. Jonathan Bagshaw was already there, and, by the manner in which he kept throwing his eyes up to the ceiling, I expected that he was hard at work on another impromptu. Determining to get the start of him, I seized on the first opportunity. The full moon was just rising, and shone in at the open windows. This I considered a favorable circumstance. Taking the rose from my buttonhole, and placing myself opposite Miranda, who was sitting at one of the windows, I began—

"'Oh, silver Luna, gently rolling through
The sapphire sky, thy vot'ry thee doth woo:
Grant him the power to paint Miranda's charms,
Which vie with hers who roused the world to arms;
Charms which may find their type in this red rose'—

"'With which, dear girl, I pray, regale your nose!' said a little blackeyed gipsy, close to my elbow, seizing on a moment's pause which I made at the close of the line.

"Oh, what a falling off was there! Tears of vexation actually started into my eyes to think that little Clara Laurens should, by her real impromptu, throw such an air of ridicule over my pretended one.

"The risibility of all present, except of Miranda and myself, was so much excited that I was obliged to abandon all thoughts of repeating the rest of it. Thus my anticipated victory over Mr. Jonathan Bagshaw was unaccomplished, and he was left alone in his glory.

"From that time to this, I have never attempted to make a single rhyme. For a long time, I was exceedingly sore on the subject of impromptus, and regarded little Clara Laurens with an evil eye."

"Your sentiments as respects Clara have, since then, undergone a change, I believe," said Lizzie, smiling.

"Yes, somewhat."

"Well, Paul," said Aunt Tabitha, "she 'll make you a good smart wife; and I, for one, am greatly obleeged to her; for, in my opinion, she saved you from making a nateral fool of yourself."

A NIGHT IN THE MOSQUITO TERRITORY.

A TALE WHICH MIGHT BE A CHRISTMAS STORY, IF THE PLOT WERE NOT LAID IN SUMMER TIME.

BY F. N. ZABRISKIE.

Once upon a time a mosquito lived in a swamp. He was considerable of a mosquito, and was consequently of great influence in the community. He was a perfect alderman of a mosquito. His stomach was of the finest dimensions, and was kept continually supplied with the very best blood. He never touched the coarser juices of his fellow brutes—not he. When he wanted a repast, he always selected the fairest and tenderest of the human family. He would often break feloniously through the keyhole of a drawing-room, and, selecting the loveliest creature of all that bright circle, he would bend over some pearly little vein, and, in a most graceful manner, plunge his polished beak into the ruby stream, and sip to his heart's content. And if he felt his spirits rising above their proper level, or his head beginning to swim, he was so prudent as to leave straightway, lest intoxication should render him an easy victim to the destroyer. His eyes were large and brilliant, and the horns upon his head were at least twice as bright as any that adorned the heads of the rest of his tribe. His wings were of the finest gauze, and his sting was as bright and quick as a sunbeam. He floated drowsily all day upon the surface of the

in bringing about, much to her regret, for the handsome stranger of the sable eyes had enlisted her sympathies. Having called his attendant, Firefly, to light the way, he started to return, for morn was beginning to ope its sunny eye over the forest-clad mountains of the east. And as they sped homewards, a musical hum so clear, so loud, and so monotonous, arose from them as never before resounded in that mosquito territory. Their song was, of course, in the mosquito dialect, the perusal of which could hardly be very entertaining to the Anglo-Saxon reader; and, as we have a very imperfect knowledge of the language ourselves, we will not presume to act as interpreter.

The song ceased. They were at the ambrosial home of Satinwing. The morning was picturing its golden phantoms in the eastern sky. The time had come when men should be abroad and mosquitos at home. Silverbeak, bidding his fair one a loving adieu, hied him to his fairy palace.

The moon had once again trod her shadowy path. There was happiness in the still, cool valley, where the mosquitos dwelt in their beautiful homes in the flowers, for Silverbeak had gone to spend a life of love with Satinwing; and there was happiness too in the stately mansion, for the pale lady was the bride of him she loved. She ever had a superstitious dread of harming the mosquitos, sting they ever so sharply, for she remembered that they had once been her preservers.

Fireside Club, May, 1851.

CONFESSIONS OF A DREAMER.

BY MRS. E. OAKES SMITH.

PART II.

MANY perhaps the majority of people, keep such a medley of an existence, so mix up the material with the spiritual, that they either dream not at all, or dream only everyday details and the dull repetitions of common events, of no magnitude in themselves, and throwing no light upon the phenomena of dreams. Their spirits, even in sleep, hover about the chimney corner; they are imps of the kitchen or spirits of the drawing-room, never ranging into the blue empyrean. These must be those whose spirits, after death, are heard rattling the kettles of the cook, or knocking mysteriously, *and retailing gossip gathered from higher intelligences who passed through their sphere on their way to a more enlarged life.* These are they who, according to Dante, are blown about in limbo; having no aim on earth, they have none in the hereafter; who are reserved for the fiery trial, when it will be seen whether they have "held foothold" of enough of the spirit to survive the test. These are the flitting ghosts of the churchyard, it may be, doomed never to rise into a better state.

Others, again, never dream; they are ridden by incubi, as dyspeptics deserve to be, but have no clear night visions: they never realize the almost beatific state, when "the young men shall see visions and old men dream dreams."

There is still another class, who have a balanced, but not over-balanced physique, who realize the Shakspearian night-comfort—"the innocent sleep" was the mournful assertion of Macbeth—and these yield themselves joyously to the drowsy god, resigning, to the temporary oblivion, their well-cared-for earthly tabernacle, with an unctuous content, at once confiding and refreshing. These remember nothing of their dreams; they

"Do God's will, and know it not."

They wake with a new life, conscious only of wandering through interminable scenes of grace and beauty, ravished by sweet sounds, and fanned by breezes softer than those of Araby; they arise with a gladness of the heart, feeling existence is a blessing by itself.

I belong to neither of these. As a child, I used to lay my head upon my pillow with an earnest expectancy. The sleep world was a vast, a peopled, and beautiful world, into which I entered as an inmate. I used to wonder that other children would devour cakes and pies, after having experienced the pains of illness or the horrors of bad dreams from that cause. I, with the most dainty perceptions, never felt even tempted to repeat such an experience. Sleep gave me a sensation of terror, when unattended by dreams, even in early life. To me it was full of images, often too vast for my infantile soul. Huge mountains, piled in solitary grandeur, towered forever around me, and shadows floating like dense banners, were flecked with light, and gave place to rainbows, and stars, and moons. I do not remember to have dreamed of the sun. I seemed myself in light always, without knowing the source from which it came.

I can recall now vividly the awe with which I used to pray before sinking into that state, and how I used to wonder if it was right to pray the good Father for pleasant dreams. Indeed, I was often puzzled to know how to call this sleeping experience; grotesque and disjointed I found it to be in my companions, but with me consistent, solemn, and earnest. I used to wonder "if I did not go to Heaven" in my sleep; and yet never dared to ask the opinion of my friends, lest they should think me ill, or desirous to appear what I was not; for I was sensitively alive to a shadow of pretension on my own part, holding back the best impulses of my

being, lest untruth or the love of approval should have a part in them.

I used to dream of joyous shapes floating in the air, which were angels to me. I must have started very early in life the heresy that angels have no wings, because these creatures had none in my sleep. These did not speak to me, but looked lovingly upon me; and I would clasp my hands with such fervency of desire to be worthy of their companionship, that I often awoke in tears. I grew shy when others talked of dreams, lest I should be called upon to describe my world of visions, which then I felt would be a desecration. I am confident, one reason why children dread being alone in the dark is owing to the huge shapes and vague impressions of unfamiliar scenes brought to the mind in the process of dreaming. It is cruel to compel them to darkness where this is the case: I have no doubt many a child might trace the morbid action of his faculties to an undue severity upon this ground. "Truly, the light is good, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun."

For myself, I needed no indulgence on this score. I was a courageous child, delighting in the mystical, and confidently expecting some revelation—longing to have a voice call me, as did the child Samuel; bending my ear to listen, and ready to say, "Speak, Lord." As life wore on, and the revelation of an actual presence was withheld, I redoubled my little fasts, and was more earnest in my prayers, that I might be accounted worthy; I inflicted childish penances upon myself, all to no purpose. Dreams of rare significancy I had, indeed, and day-dreams of grandeur and beauty too deep for any utterance; poetry, in its manifold forms, came to my mind's eye, but unearthly shapes and strange voices were not vouchsafed.

I used to dream of being poised in space, surrounded with a gray atmosphere which gave back neither object nor voice. I felt a strange pleasure in this pulseless kind of being, so aimless, silent, but yet full of unearthly rest; for I was a sensitive child, so acute in my perceptions, that thoughts were so many pains, and joy and grief had a magnitude disproportioned to my years. They err who say childhood is the happiest period of life I am sure that, to me, with all the joyousness of my nature, my sense of suffering was so poignant that even now it pains me to recall the remembrance. Intense happiness, as well as intense suffering, had no external manifestation with me. I was still, silent, and often have fainted without the utterance of a word, while the shades of feeling were so many showers of smiles or tears; hence the comfort of this recurring dream of silence and eternal rest, with the consciousness of existence free from all frettings, and holding every wearied faculty in abeyance

THE DEAD SEA.

(See Plate.)

This wood-cut presents an accurate view of the shore of the Dead Sea, for which we are indebted to the Narrative of the United States Expedition to the River Jordan, etc., by W. F. Lynch, U. S. N. That officer tells us that, soon after entering the Dead Sea with his boats. and after a perilous descent of the River Jordan, a fresh north-west wind commenced blowing, and gradually increased to a gale, until the sea presented an agitated surface of foaming brine; the spray, evaporating as it fell, leaving incrustations of salt upon the clothes and hands and faces of the boats' crews, which, whilst it conveyed a prickly sensation wherever it touched the skin, was, above all, exceedingly painful to the eyes. Meanwhile the boats, heavily laden, struggled sluggishly at first; but when the wind freshened in its fierceness, from the density of the water, it seemed that their bows were encountering the hammers of the Titans, instead of the opposing waves of an angry sea. "At times," says the fearless narrator, "it seemed as if the Dread Almighty frowned upon our efforts to navigate a sea, the creation of his wrath. But although the sea had assumed a threatening aspect, and the fretted mountains, sharp and incinerated, loomed terrific on either side, and salt and ashes mingled with the sands, and fetid sulphurous springs trickled down the ravines, we did not despair; awe-struck, but not terrified; fearing the worst, yet hoping for the best, we prepared to spend a dreary night upon the dreariest waste we had ever seen." Suddenly, however, the wind abated, and with it the sea as rapidly fell; the water, from its ponderous quality, settling as soon as the agitating cause had ceased to act. "Within twenty minutes from the time," continues the narrator, "we bore away from the sea, which threatened to engulf us, we were pulling away, at a rapid rate, over a placid sheet of water, that scarcely rippled beneath us; and a rain cloud, which had enveloped the sterile mountains of the Arabian shore, lifted up, and left their rugged outlines lurking in the light of the setting sun."

The next day, after entering the Dead Sea, the commander of the expedition made an excursion along the base of the mountain, towards Râs es Feshka, but on every side the scene was one of unmixed desolation. "The air, tainted with the sulphuretted hydrogen of the stream of a fountain—Ain el Feshka, Fountain of the Stride—gave a tawny hue even to the foliage of the cane, which is elsewhere of so

THE CHILD-LOVE.

BY ALICE B. NEAL.

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us—
He made and loveth all."—COLERIDGE.

"I AM sure *you* love me, little Miriam?"

"Love you?—oh, so dearly!" And, as if her childish words needed a stronger confirmation, she put her arms caressingly about his neck and laid her head upon his bosom. Her face was very lovely as she looked up to him in all the winning truthfulness of an affectionate heart. Large gray eyes, with lashes so long and deep as almost to give them a sorrowful expression at times, and a mouth now smiling, and so disclosing small pearly teeth, and then the crimson lips would meet in pouting fullness—

"As though a rose should shut,
And be a bud again."

So thought the student as he bent down to return the fond caress, and mingled his darker locks with the light floating curls that were thrown back over his shoulder.

"And will you *always* love me, Miriam?"

"Oh, always!"

"But when I am gone—for I may not be with you long; and then, when you do not see me every day, and you have other friends who love you better, and can make you more beautiful presents?"

She seemed to be pained, as if she understood the worldliness thus imputed to her, young as she was.

"But why must you go? and where will you go? Home?"

"Home! Ah no, my child; I have not had a home these many years."

And then they were both silent for a little while; she pitying him because he had no home, and he dwelling on thoughts and recollections which the word had called up. The low brown farm house where his boyish days were passed, with the mossy bank around the well; the little garden at the entrance of the orchard; the orchard itself, white with blossoms at this very season of the year. And then there was the brook, gurgling through the alder bushes, and reflecting the tall spires of the crimson cardinal, or the field lily, that sprung among the rich grass. He seemed once more to lie, an idle, careless boy, watching the clouds floating lazily overhead, while the summer insects sang around him, and the wind came gently to lift the hair from his sunburnt forehead.

This brought a recollection of his mother's kiss. It always seemed to him like the summer wind, so quiet, so warm, so loving. Her kiss and blessing, as she bent over his pillow, and then she would kneel and pray so earnestly for her son, her only child. How unlike his father was that gentle woman! He had wondered at that even when a boy. His stern, rigid parent, who rarely smiled, and made self-denial and never-ceasing labor his religion, as though he felt the curse of Cain ever upon his rugged fields. They were united only in one thing, their love for him, and the zealous prayer that he might be, like Samuel, called even in childhood to the service of the Temple. So they had dedicated him; and, when he saw the grass springing upon their graves in the churchyard, and took a last look upon that humble home, now passed into other hands, he remembered this strong wish of the hearts that had loved him so, and were now mouldering to dust beneath his feet.

"But where are you going?" said the child, who had been thinking of many other things, and had now returned to this new fear of parting.

"Many, many hundred miles from this, Miriam, away from the busy city and its crowded streets. Far off to the still woods, where there are no church bells, and even no Sabbaths. I am going to the poor Indians, to teach them where to look for the Great Spirit they worship, and to the settlers of those western lands, ruder still, and in darker ignorance. They scarcely know there is a God."

"But they have the sky there, and the sun; and who do they think made them and the little flowers in the grass? They could not make the flowers!"

"But they do not love the flowers and the sky as you do; they are blind: 'Eyes have they and they see not; ears, but they do not hear.' So I am going to them with God's own word, that will speak more plainly to their hearts. Do you not think it will be a beautiful life"—and his sunken eyes glanced with strange enthusiasm—"devoting every power of soul and body to those benighted people, forgetting this life and its comforts and pleasures in the thoughts of that which is to come?—reaping the broad whitening harvest?"

He forgot that he was speaking to a child. And yet she seemed to understand him, at least to feel that he was swayed by some noble emotion; for she raised her head and listened eagerly, as if a new life of thought was opened to her.

"And will you have a *home* there?"

"Nay, I shall never have a home on earth; parents, wife, children are not for me. I go forth with neither purse nor scrip, following our Divine Master; I shall not have where to lay my head. But his love constrains me; he will not desert his

servant." And his voice sank, as it were, to a thought of prayer, for the strength he would need in the arduous path he had chosen.

"But you will be all alone and sick, and there will be no one to take care of you; then perhaps you will die." The look of sadness we have spoken of came into the child's earnest eyes, as she laid her soft head against his cheek, and wondered why he should choose to go away from her.

"We will not talk of this any longer, little one. I have made you so sad and grave. I do not like that look on your face; it is too womanly for such a little maiden. You are too young to understand all these things, and you must not try to; but you must love me, that is all I ask. See, there is your kitten come to invite you away from me."

It was with a strong effort that he had shaken off the sombre mood into which he had fallen, and attempted to enter into her childish amusements once more. He was startled by the earnest, dreamy look that she still retained. As he had said, it was too womanly for that young fair face.

She smiled again; obedience to those she loved was the strong principle of her nature, for she had ever been governed by affection. No one ever spoke a harsh word to Miriam, motherless Miriam Arnold, the light of her father's lonely life, and the pet of the neighbors, who looked out to catch a glimpse of her light figure as she bounded up the dark court like a flitting ray of sunshine. It was a gloomy abode for such a bright young creature, or a stranger would have thought so. The house so old and cheerless, far away from the gay shops and the beautiful women who frequent them. There was not even a green tree or an ivy wreath to refresh the eye, nothing but Miriam's little pot of mignonette upon the window-sill; fresh and fragrant like herself, and her bird, who sang above it with a carol as light-hearted as her own. The bird, the child, and the flowers, these were the light of that lonely house, since Miriam's mother had faded in its dreariness. And it was home, too, even if the old servant, who moved with such a cautious tread among the dusty books of her master's study, was the only companionable creature, save the bird. How carefully she rubbed the dingy furniture, and mended the threadbare curtains, long since faded from their cheerful neatness! It was, perhaps, this still seclusion that had given Miriam, with all her eager childish grace, thoughts above her years; and, after her friend had gone, she put the kitten from her lap and leaned out of the window to watch for her father's return, musing, as she had never done before, how men could ever live without knowing they had a Father up in Heaven, and who else they could thank for taking care of them through the long dark night? And then her friend—Paul, he had told her to call him, when he first came to read those strange Hebrew words to her father, a daily study of the ancient language of the Bible he reverenced so much—Paul was going away to tell them to love Him. How very good he was! She should miss him a great deal though. Perhaps he would take her, too. Oh, she had not thought of that before! But, then, there was her father! No, Paul must go alone. Poor Paul, with no one to love him but herself. How gravely he had made her promise to love him, as if she had not always done so from that very first day when he had taken her upon his knee and talked to her as no one else could talk!

The young curate, for such he was, of a wealthy parish church, old and "lukewarm" because of its long prosperity, had gone to his daily duty of reading the evening service to a scattered congregation, half hidden in the high straight pews, that almost stifled their faint responses. He went with a heavy load upon his heart, for he was a stranger among them and to their sympathies. There was no poverty to call such as he to their homes; the rector only was bidden to the rich man's feasts. He came and went to and from the gilded chancel, with scarce a smile of recognition from those to whom his rich voice had read the "comfortable words" of their Master, and his. The Bible told him they were brethren, but his heart said they were utter strangers. It was this cold supineness that had first turned his thoughts to a more earnest, active life among men "ready to perish," while his present ministry was to those who were "full and had need of nothing." And, at last, after many a struggle and many a prayer, he had steadfastly turned his face to a mission in the western wilds of his native land.

In all that wide, wide city there was one only object his heart could cling to — the little child whose arms had circled him, whose kiss had comforted his loneliness. This was perhaps from his own reserve, for he had been solitary even from a boy. He had never attached his playmates to him, he could not seek for sympathy among strangers; opening to them the sorrows of his heart, a gentle heart like the mother who had given him life: but he checked its longing sympathies with a pride inherited from his sterner parent, and turned to fasting and lonely vigils of prayer and meditation. Miriam was the frail golden link that bound him to active human sympathies. He was attracted by her strange loveliness as she came, half pleadingly, half timidly, to prefer some request to her father, and since then she had been the prattling companion of many a lonely hour, when the task was ended, and his teacher had gone forth to impart to other pupils the stores of his great learning.

She was watching for him the next day at the entrance of the court, as he came slowly along, absorbed in one of those abstracted moods which had now become habitual to him. Her eyes brightened as she caught sight of his slender figure, and she ran to place her hand in his with the confidence of an habitual favorite. Something which pleased her very much had evidently occurred; but when she was questioned, she only smiled, and said it was a great secret; even papa was not to be told. Yet

it was not naughty: Margery had said so. Every day after that, for a long time, he found the faithful little sentinel at her post; and sometimes their walk was extended, and she would go with him into the busy street, clinging closer to her dear companion, and looking up with smiles into his face, if the crowd jostled her, the embodiment of the spirit of faith.

At last the secret was revealed. It was when he came to tell her that he was going, all was ready for his departure, and he had but one farewell to make. He was later than usual, and she was watching for him with more eagerness than ever. She tripped demurely by his side, looking so beautiful in her clean white dress, and her curls in such rich profusion flowing round her delicate throat. He could not bear to pain her happy heart by the sad news of their parting, so he drew her gently to his bosom for the last time, while he waited for her father's return; and they were all alone but the kitten purring in the sun, and old Margery bustling in and out intent on household cares. They did not talk much, but now and then she would pass her hand caressingly over his face, or he would bend down and kiss her tenderly. At last he said—

"I am going, Miriam. This is the last time I shall see you in many a day."

"Going!" she said, echoing the word sorrowfully.

"Yes, as I told you when the spring first came. To-morrow I shall be on my way to the deep woods and the boundless prairies of the western land."

He expected at least a burst of passionate sobs; but she only nestled closer to his heart, and twined her arm more tightly about his neck.

After a little time, she slid from his knee, still sorrowful, and came back to him holding a little picture. It was a miniature of herself, exceedingly lifelike, and it had the dreamy, serious gaze which he had first noticed when speaking of his mission. This was her innocent little secret. It had been painted by a poor artist, with more talent than friends, who had his home in the same dark court. He had thought her so beautiful, that he begged her to sit to him, intending a surprise to her father, who, in his unostentatious way, had once been of service to his poorer neighbor. That very day she had brought it home, so she told Paul, and laid it in the book before him.

"And he was pleased," said Paul, "and kissed you, and thought it was very like you, as I do?"

"I don't believe he liked it so very much. I don't think he likes pictures at all," answered the child. "He never looks at my sweet mother, with the blue dress and the rose in her hair. But he smiled, and told me to give it to the person I loved best in the world."

"And you gave it to Margery, perhaps?" Paul smiled at the thought of bestowing such a gem upon Margery's dark little kitchen.

"No, I don't love her best, and that would not be right. I kept it for you, because there is no one but papa and you I ever dream about. Sometimes I have such lovely dreams, and think you are never going away. But you are, and you must take this, and keep it always. I'm sure you will, Paul."

A tear, yes, a tear, fell upon the beautiful picture—so touched was he by the earnestness and sincerity of her affection, and the thought that he was so soon to leave her.

Her father came, a mild, benevolent-looking man; but, nevertheless, the air of one who had no strong hopes or desires. He was sorry to part with his favorite pupil, but blessed him in God's name; for he, too, had been "a minister about holy things," and knew the burning zeal which had filled the heart of the young *devotee*.

The morrow came, and Miriam was restless and sad as the hour for their walk drew near, and there was no friend to join her. Many and many a day did she linger at their old trysting-place, her heart beating fast, if she saw in the distance a face or figure that might be his. But one day after another came and went, and he was not there. Then she found other friends, and Time was her consoler.

Years, many years had passed, and the missionary sat at the door of his rude cabin, and leaned his weary head against the rough unhewn beams for support. He was far older, and had a dejected, sorrowful air that had deepened the lines upon his forehead, though his dark clustering hair had not silvered, and his eyes still lighted with the fire of manly thought. Yet the fresh vigor of his youth was spent, and his heart was weary and athirst for closer sympathy than he had found among the rude dwellers of the land. Their numbers had greatly increased since he first came among them, and the Indian haunts had retreated from before approaching civilization. They had prayed him to remain among them, to visit their sick and bury their dead, and they were kind to him in their own way. They had built his cabin, and furnished it with their own rude manufactures, and brought him presents of game from the forest, and fruit from their thriving farms. But, now the zeal of his first consecration was spent, he saw little fruit of all his labors; the wilderness had not yet blossomed as the rose. He longed for some one who could sympathize in his ardent desire to do good, and to encourage him to cast his "bread upon the waters." He covered his face with his hands and prayed, communing with the only intelligence that could read his heart, and then he looked around him and still sighed

Perhaps it was that he had seen the cheerful blaze from the fireside of some of his people, as he came homewards, and stopped to speak some playful word with the urchins before the door; but as he sighed, he wondered if he could have been happier had he not denied to his starving heart all human, household love. "Perhaps I have wronged my nature," he thought. "It may not be required of me to lead this lonely life." And then—he never could tell what brought the recollection so vividly before him at that moment—there came a yearning